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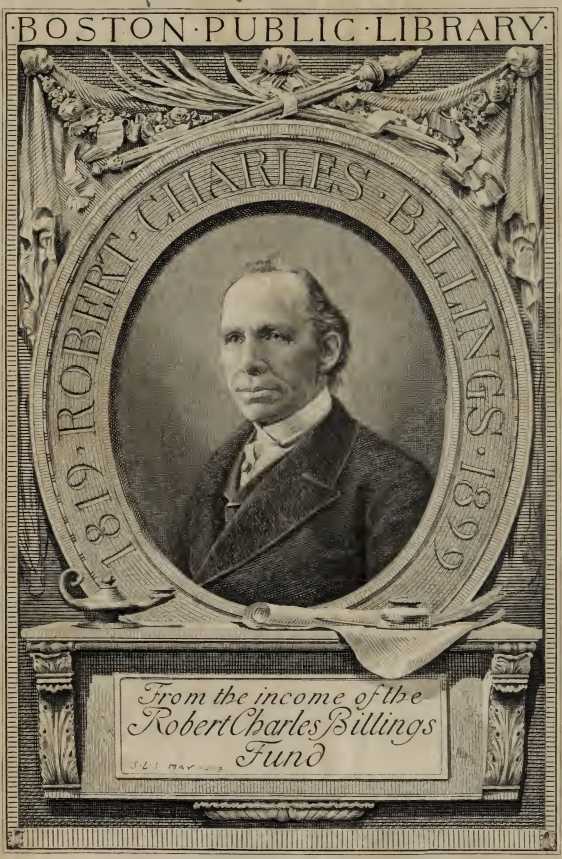

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EPITAPH

MUCH ADO

ABOUT

NOTHING.

A COMEDY,

**G.4015.52

By WILLIAM SHAKESPEAR.

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LONDON:

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Dramatis Perſonæ.

DON PEDRO, *Prince of* Arragon.
Leonato, *Governor of* Meſſina.
Don John, *Baſtard Brother to Don* Pedro.
Claudio, *a young Lord of* Florence, *Favourite to Don* Pedro.
Benedick, *a young Lord of* Padua, *favour'd likewiſe by Don* Pedro.
Balthazar, *Servant to Don* Pedro.
Antonio, *Brother to* Leonato.
Borachio, *Confident to Don* John.
Conrade, *Friend to* Borachio.
Dogberry, Verges, } *two fooliſh Officers.*

Innogen, *Wife to* Leonato.
Hero, *Daughter to* Leonato *and* Innogen.
Beatrice, *Niece to* Leonato.
Margaret, Urſula, } *two Gentlewomen attending on* Hero.

A Friar, Meſſenger, Watch, Town-Clerk, Sexton, and Attendants.

SCENE, *Meſſina.*

The Story from Arioſto, Orl. Furl. *l.* 5.

Much

Much Ado about Nothing.

ACT I. SCENE I.

A Court before Leonato's *House.*

Enter Leonato, Innogen, Hero *and* Beatrice, *with a Meſſenger.*

LEONATO.

I Learn in this letter, that Don *Pedro* of *Arragon* comes this night to *Meſſina*.

Meſſ. He is very near by this; he was not three leagues off when I left him.

Leon. How many gentlemen have you loſt in this action?

Meſſ. But few of any ſort, and none of name.

Leon. A victory is twice itſelf, when the atcheiver brings home full numbers; I find here that Don *Pedro* hath beſtow'd much honour on a young *Florentine*, call'd *Claudio*.

Meſſ. Much deſerved on his part, and equally remembred by Don *Pedro*: he hath borne himſelf beyond the promiſe of his age, doing in the figure of a lamb the feats of a lion: he hath indeed better better'd expectation, than you muſt expect of me to tell you how.

Leon. He hath an uncle here in *Meſſina* will be very much glad of it.

Meſſ. I have already delivered him letters, and there appears much joy in him, even ſo much, that joy could not ſhew itſelf modeſt enough, without a badge of bitterneſs.

Leon. Did he break out into tears?

Meſſ. In great meaſure.

Leon. A kind overflow of kindneſs; there are no faces truer than thoſe that are ſo waſh'd. how much better is it to weep at joy, than to joy at weeping?

Beat. I pray you, is Signior *Montanto* returned from the wars or no?

Meſſ. I know none of that name, lady; there was none ſuch in the army of any ſort.

Leon. What is he that you aſk for, neice?

Hero. My couſin means Signior *Benedick* of *Padua.*

Meſſ. O he's return'd, and as pleaſant as ever he was.

Beat. He ſet up his bills here in *Meſſina*, and challeng'd *Cupid* at the flight; and my uncle's fool reading the challenge, ſubſcrib'd for *Cupid*, and challeng'd him at the bird-bolt. I pray you, how many hath he kill'd and eaten in theſe wars? but how many hath he kill'd? for indeed I promis'd to eat all of his killing.

Leon. 'Faith, niece, you tax Signior *Benedick* too much; but he'll be meet with you, I doubt it not.

Meſſ. He hath done good ſervice lady, in theſe wars.

Beat. You had muſty victuals, and he hath holp to eat it; he's a very valiant trencher-man, he hath an excellent ſtomach.

Meſſ. And a good ſoldier too, lady.

Beat. And a good ſoldier to a lady! But what is he to a lord?

Meſſ. A lord to a lord, a man to a man, ſtuft with all honourable virtues.

Beat. It is ſo indeed, he is no leſs than a ſtuft man: but for the ſtuffing,—— well, we are all mortal.

Leon. You muſt not, Sir, miſtake my niece: there is a kind of merry war betwixt Signior *Benedick* and her; they never meet, but there's a ſkirmiſh of wit between them.

Beat. Alas, he gets nothing by that. In our laſt conflict, four of his five wits went halting off, and now is the

the whole man govern'd with one: So that, if he have wit enough to keep himſelf warm, let him bear it for a difference between himſelf and his horſe, for it is all the wealth that he hath left to be known a reaſonable creature. Who is his companion now? He hath every month a new ſworn brother.

Meſſ. Is it poſſible?

Beat. Very eaſily poſſible; he wears his faith but as the faſhion of his hat, it ever changes with the next block.

Meſſ. I ſee, lady, the gentleman is not in your books.

Beat. No; if he were I would burn my ſtudy. But I pray you who is his companion? is there no young ſquarer now, that will make a voyage with him to the devil?

Meſſ. He is moſt in the company of the right noble *Claudio.*

Beat. O lord, he well hang upon him like a diſeaſe; he is ſooner caught than the peſtilence, and the taker runs preſently mad. God help the noble *Claudio,* if he have caught the *Benedick,* it will coſt him a thouſand pound ere it be cur'd.

Meſſ. I will hold friends with you, lady.

Beat. Do, good friend.

Leon. You'll ne'er run mad, niece.

Beat. No, not 'till a hot *January.*

Meſſ. Don *Pedro* is approach'd.

Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, Benedick, Balthazar *and Don* John.

Pedro. Good Signior *Leonato,* you are come to meet your trouble: the faſhion of the world is to avoid coſt, and you encounter it.

Leon. Never came trouble to my houſe in the likeneſs of your Grace; for trouble being gone, comfort ſhould remain; but when you depart from me, ſorrow abides, and happineſs takes his leave.

Pedro. You embrace your charge moſt willingly: I think this is your daughter.

Leon. Her mother hath many times told me ſo.

Bene. Were you in doubt, that you aſk'd her?

Leon. Signior *Benedick,* no, for then were you a child.

Pedro You have it full, *Benedick*; you may gueſs by this what you are, being a man: truly the lady favours herſelf; be happy, lady, for are you like an honourable father.

Bene. If Signior *Leonato* be her father, ſhe would not have his head on her ſhoulders for all *Meſſina*, as like him as ſhe is.

Beat. I wonder that you will ſtill be talking, Signior *Benedick*, no body marks you.

Bene. What, my dear lady Diſdain! are you yet living?

Beat. Is it poſſible diſdain ſhould die, while ſhe hath ſuch meet food to feed it, as Signior *Benedick?* Courteſy itſelf muſt convert to diſdain, if you come in her preſence.

Bene. Then is courteſy a turn-coat: but it is certain I am lov'd of all ladies, only you excepted; and I would I could find in my heart that I had not a hard heart, for truly I love none.

Beat. A dear happineſs to women, they would elſe have been troubled with a pernicious ſuitor. I thank God and my cold blood, I am of your humour for that; I had rather hear my dog bark at a crow, than a man ſwear he loves me.

Bene. God keep your ladyſhip ſtill in that mind, ſo ſome gentleman or other ſhall ſcape a predeſtinate ſcratch'd face.

Beat Scratching could not make it worſe, if 'twere ſuch a face as yours were.

Bene. Well you are a rare parrot-teacher.

Beat. A bird of my tongue is better than a beaſt of yours.

Bene. I would my horſe had the ſpeed of your tongue, and ſo good a continuer; but keep your way a God's name, I have done.

Beat. You always end with a jade's trick, I know you of old.

Pedro. This is the ſum of all: *Leonato*, Signior *Claudio*, and Signior *Benedick*; my dear friend *Leonato* hath invited you all; I tell him we ſhall ſtay here at the leaſt a month, and he heartily prays ſome occaſion may detain us longer: I dare ſwear he is no hypocrite, but prays from his heart.

Leon.

Leon. If you ſwear, my Lord, you ſhall not be forſworn. Let me bid you welcome, my lord; being reconciled to the prince your brother, I owe you all duty.

John. I thank you; I am not of many words, but I thank you.

Leon. Pleaſe it your grace lead on?

Pedro. Your hand, *Leonato*, we will go together.

[*Exeunt all but* Benedick *and* Claudio.

Claud. Benedick, didſt thou note the daughter of Signior *Leonato?*

Bene. I noted her not, but I look'd on her.

Claud. Is ſhe not a modeſt young lady?

Bene. Do you queſtion me, as an honeſt man ſhould do, for my ſimple true judgment? or would you have me ſpeak after my cuſtom, as being a profeſſed tyrant to their ſex?

Claud. No, I pr'ythee ſpeak in ſober judgment.

Bene. Why i'faith methinks ſhe is too low for an high praiſe, too brown for a fair praiſe, and too little for a great praiſe; only this commendation I can afford her, that were ſhe other than ſhe is, ſhe were unhandſome; and being no other but as ſhe is, I do not like her.

Claud. Thou think'ſt I am in ſport, I pray thee tell me truly how thou lik'ſt her.

Bene. Would you buy her, that you enquire after her?

Claud. Can the world buy ſuch a jewel?

Bene. Yea, and a caſe to put it into; but ſpeak you this with a ſad brow? or do you play the flouting jack, to tell us *Cupid* is a good hare finder, and *Vulcan* a rare carpenter? come, in what key ſhall a man take you, to go in the ſong.

Claud. In mine eye, ſhe is the ſweeteſt lady that I ever look'd on.

Bene. I can ſee yet without ſpectacles, and I ſee no ſuch matter; there's her couſin, if ſhe were not poſſeſt with ſuch a fury, exceeds her as much in beauty, as the firſt of *May* doth the laſt of *December:* but I hope you have no intent to turn huſband, have you?

Claud. I would ſcarce truſt myſelf, though I had ſworn the contrary, if *Hero* would be my wife.

Bene. Is't come to this in faith? hath not the world one man, but he will wear his cap with ſuſpicion? ſhall I never ſee a bachelor of threeſcore again? go to i'faith, if thou wilt needs thruſt thy neck into a yoke, wear the print of it, and ſigh away *Sundays:* look Don *Pedro* is return'd to ſeek you.

Re enter Don Pedro *and Don* John.

Pedro. What ſecret hath held you here, that you follow'd not to *Leonato*'s houſe?

Bene. I would your grace would conſtrain me to tell.

Pedro. I charge thee on thy allegiance.

Bene. You hear, Count *Claudio:* I can be ſecret as a dumb man, I would have you think ſo; but on my allegiance, mark you this; on my allegiance, he is in love, with whom? now that is your Grace's part: mark how ſhort his anſwer is, with *Hero*, *Leonato*'s ſhort daughter.

Claud. If this were ſo, ſo were it uttered.

Bene. Like the old tale, my lord, it is not ſo, nor 'twas not ſo; but indeed, God forbid it ſhould be ſo.

Claud. If my paſſion change not ſhortly, God forbid it ſhould be otherwiſe.

Pedro. Amen, if you love her; for the lady is very well worthy.

Claud. You ſpeak this to fetch me in, my lord.

Pedro. By my troth I ſpeak my thought.

Claud. And in faith, my lord, I ſpoke mine.

Bene. And by my two faiths and troths, my lord, I ſpeak mine.

Claud. That I love her, I feel.

Pedro. That ſhe is worthy, I know.

Bene. That I neither feel how ſhe ſhould be loved, nor know how ſhe ſhould be worthy, is the opinion that fire cannot melt out of me; I will die in it at the ſtake.

Pedro. Thou waſt ever an obſtinate heretick in the deſpight of beauty.

Claud. And never could maintain his part, but in the force of his will.

Bene. That a woman conceived me, I thank her; that ſhe brought me up, I likewiſe give her moſt humble thanks; but that I will have a recheate winded in my forehead, or hang my bugle in an inviſible baldrick,

rick, all women ſhall pardon me; becauſe I will not do them the wrong to miſtruſt any, I will do myſelf the right to truſt none; and the fine is, for the which I may go the finer, I will live a bachelor.

Pedro. I ſhall ſee thee, ere I die, look pale with love.

Bene. With anger, with ſickneſs, or with hunger, my lord, not with love; prove that ever I loſe more blood with love, than I will get again with drinking, pick out my eyes with a ballad-maker's pen, and hang me up at the door of a brothel-houſe for the ſign of blind *Cupid*.

Pedro. Well, if ever thou doſt fall from this faith, thou wilt prove a notable argument.

Bene. If I do, hang me in a bottle like a cat, and ſhoot at me, and he that hits me, let him be clapt on the ſhoulder, and call'd *Adam*.

Pedro. Well, as time ſhall try; in time the ſavage bull doth bear the yoke.

Bene. The ſavage bull may, but if ever the ſenſible *Benedick* bear it, pluck off the bull's horns, and ſet them in my forehead, and let me be vilely painted; and in ſuch great letters as they write, *Here is good Horſe to hire*, let them ſignify under my ſign, *Here you may ſee* Benedick, *the marry'd man*.

Claud. If this ſhould ever happen, thou wouldſt be horn-mad.

Pedro. Nay, if *Cupid* hath not ſpent all his quiver in *Venice*, thou wilt quake for this ſhortly.

Bene. I look for an earthquake too then.

Pedro. Well, you will temporize with the hours; in the mean time, good Signior *Benedick*, repair to *Leonato*'s, commend me to him, and tell him I will not fail him at ſupper, for indeed he hath made great preparation.

Bene. I have almoſt matter enough in me for ſuch an ambaſſage, and ſo I commit you.

Claud. To the tuition of God. From my houſe, if I had it.

Pedro. The ſixth of *July*, your loving friend, *Benedick*.

Bene. Nay, mock not, mock not; the body of your diſcourſe is ſometimes guarded with fragments, and the guards are but ſlightly baſted on neither: ere you flout

old

old ends any further, examine your conſcience, and ſo I leave you. [*Exit.*

Claud. My Liege, your highneſs may now do me good.

Pedro. My love is thine to teach, teach it but how,
And thou ſhalt ſee how apt it is to learn
Any hard leſſon that may do thee good.

Claud. Hath *Leonato* any ſon, my Lord?

Pedro. No child but *Hero*, ſhe's his only heir:
Doſt thou affect her, *Claudio?*

Claud. O my lord,
When you went onward on this ended action
I look'd upon her with a ſoldier's eye,
That lik'd, but had a rougher taſk in hand
Than to drive liking to the name of love;
But now I am return'd, and that war thoughts
Have left their places vacant; in their rooms
Come throronging ſoft and delicate deſires,
All prompting me how fair young *Hero* is,
Saying I lik'd her ere I went to wars.

Pedro. Thou wilt be like a lover preſently,
And tire the hearer with a book of words:
If thou doſt love fair *Hero*, cheriſh it,
And I'll break with her: was't not to this end,
That thou began'ſt to twiſt ſo fine a ſtory?

Claud. How ſweetly do you miniſter to love,
That know love's grief by his complexion!
But left my liking might too ſudden ſeem,
I would have ſalv'd it with a longer treatiſe.

Pedro. What need the bridge much broader than the flood?
The faireſt grant is the neceſſity;
Look what will ſerve, is fit; 'tis once thou loveſt,
And I will fit thee with the remedy.
I know we ſhall have revelling to-night,
I will aſſume thy part in ſome diſguiſe,
And tell fair *Hero* I am *Claudio*,
And in her boſom I'll unclaſp my heart,
And take her hearing priſoner with the force
And ſtrong encounter of my amourous tale;
Then after to her father will I break,
And the concluſion is, ſhe ſhall be thine;
In practice let us put it preſently. [*Exeunt.*

Re-

Re-enter Leonato *and* Antonio.

Leon. How now, brother, where is my couſin your ſon? hath he provided this muſick?

Ant. He is very buſy about it; but brother, I can tell you news that you yet dream'd not of.

Leon. Are they good?

Ant. As the event ſtamps them, but they have a good cover; they ſhow well outward. The Prince and Count *Claudio*, walking in a thick pleach'd alley in my orchard, were thus over-heard by a man of mine: the Prince diſcover'd to *Claudio* that he lov'd my neice your daughter, and meant to acknowledge it this night in a dance; and if he found her accordant, meant to take the preſent time by the top, and inſtantly break with you of it.

Leon. Hath the fellow any wit that told you this?

Ant. A good ſharp fellow. I will ſend for him, and queſtion him yourſelf.

Leon. No, no; we will hold it as a dream, 'till it appear itſelf: but I will accquaint my daughter with all, that ſhe may be the better prepared for anſwer, if peradventure this be true; go you and tell her of it: couſins, you know what you have to do. O, I cry you mercy, friend, go you with me, and I will uſe your ſkill; good couſin, have a care this buſy time.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter Don John *and* Conrade.

Conr. What the good-jeer my lord, why are you thus out of meaſure ſad?

John. There is no meaſure in the occaſion that breeds, therefore the ſadneſs is without limit.

Conr. You ſhould hear reaſon.

John. And when I have heard it, what bleſſing bringeth it?

Conr. If not a preſent remedy, yet a patient ſufferance.

John. I wonder that thou (being, as thou ſay'ſt thou art, born under *Saturn*) goeſt about to apply a moral medicine to a mortifying miſchief: I cannot hide what I am: I muſt be ſad when I have cauſe, and ſmile at no man's jeſts; eat when I have a ſtomach, and wait for no man's leiſure; ſleep when I am drowſy, and tend on

no

no man's buſineſs; laugh when I am merry, and claw no man in his humour.

Conr. Yea, but you muſt not make the full ſhow of this, 'till you may do it without controlement; you have of late ſtood out againſt your brother, and he hath ta'en you newly into his grace, where it is impoſſible you ſhould take root, but by the fair weather that you make yourſelf; it is needful that you frame the ſeaſon for your own harveſt.

John. I had rather be a canker in a hedge, than a roſe in his grace; and it better fits my blood to be diſdain'd of all, than to faſhion a carriage to rob love from any: in this (though I cannot be ſaid to be a flattering honeſt man) it muſt not be deny'd but I am a plain-dealing villain; I am truſted with a muzzel, and infranchiſed with a clog, therefore I have decreed not to ſing in my cage: if I had my mouth, I would bite; if I had my liberty, I would do my liking: in the mean time let me be that I am, and ſeek not to alter me.

Conr. Can you make no uſe of your diſcontent?

John. I will make all uſe of it, for I uſe it only. Who comes here? What news, *Borachio?*

Enter Borachio.

Bora. I came yonder from a great ſupper; the Prince, your Brother, is royally entertain'd by *Leonato:* and I can give you intelligence of an intended marriage.

John. Will it ſerve for any model to build miſchief on? What is he for a fool that betroths himſelf to unquietneſs?

Bora. Marry, it is your brother's right hand.

John. Who, the moſt exquiſite *Claudio?*

Bora. Even he.

John. A proper ſquire; and who, and who? which way looks he?

Bora. Marry, on *Hero,* the daughter and heir of *Leonato.*

John. A very forward *March* chick! How come you to this?

Bora. Being entertain'd for a perfumer, as I was ſmoking a muſty room, comes me the Prince and *Claudio* hand in hand in ſad conference: I whipt behind the arras, and there heard it agreed upon that the Prince

Prince ſhould woo *Hero* for himſelf, and having obtain'd her, give her to count *Claudio*.

John. Come, come, let us thither, this may prove food to my diſpleaſure: that young ſtart-up hath all the glory of my overthrow; if I can croſs him any way, I bleſs myſelf every way; you are both ſure, and will aſſiſt me?

Conr. To the death, my lord.

John. Let us to the great ſupper, their cheer is the greater that I am ſubdu'd; would the cook were of my mind: ſhall we go prove what's to be done?

Bora. We'll wait upon your lordſhip. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II. SCENE I.

Leonato's *Houſe.*

Enter Leonato, Antonio, Innogen, Hero, Beatrice, Margaret *and* Urſula.

LEONATO.

WAS not Count *John* here at ſupper?

Ant. I ſaw him not.

Beat. How tartly that gentleman looks! I can never ſee him, but I am heart burn'd an hour after.

Hero. He is of a very melancholy diſpoſition.

Beat. He were an excellent man that were made juſt in the mid way between him and *Benedick*; the one is too like an image, and ſays nothing; and the other too like my lady's eldeſt ſon, evermore tatling.

Leon. Then half Signior *Benedick*'s tongue in Count *John*'s mouth, and half Count *John*'s melancholy in Signior *Benedick*'s face ———

Beat. With a good leg, and a good foot, uncle, and money enough in his purſe, ſuch a man would win any woman in the world—if he could get her good-will.

Leon. By my troth, niece, thou wilt never get thee a huſband, if thou be ſo ſhrewd of thy tongue.

Ant.

Ant. In faith she's too curst.

Beat. Too curst is more than curst, I shall lessen God's sending that way; for it is said, God sends a curst cow short horns, but to a cow too curst he sends none.

Leon. So by being too curst, god will send you no horns.

Beat. Just, if he send me no husband; for the which blessing I am at him upon my knees every morning and evening: Lord! I could not endure a husband with a beard on his face, I had rather lay in woollen.

Leon. You may light upon a husband that hath no beard.

Beat. What should I do with him? dress him in my apparel, and make him my waiting-gentlewoman? He that hath a beard is more than a youth, and he that hath no beard is less than a man; and he that is more than a youth, is not fit for me; and he that is less than a man, I am not for him; therefore I will even take six pence in earnest of the bearherd, and lead his apes into hell.

Leon. Well then, go you into hell.

Beat. No, but to the gate; and there will the devil meet me like an old cuckold, with his horns on his head, and say, Get you to heaven, *Beatrice*, get you to heaven, here's no place for you maids; so deliver I up my apes, and away to St. *Peter*, for the heavens; he shews me where the bachelors sit, and there live we as merry as the day is long.

Ant. Well, neice, I trust you will be rul'd by your father. [*To* Hero.

Beat. Yes, faith, it is my cousin's duty to make curt'sy, and say, as it pleases you; but yet for all that, cousin, let him be a handsome fellow, or else make another curt'sy, and say, father, as it pleases me.

Leon. Well, neice, I hope to see you one day fitted with a husband.

Beat. Not till God make men of some other metal than earth; would it not grieve a woman to be over-master'd with a piece of valiant dust? to make account of her life to a clod of way-ward marle? No, uncle, I'll none; *Adam*'s sons are my brethren, and truly I hold it a sin to match in my kindred.

Leon.

Leon. Daughter, remember what I told you; if the Prince do ſollicit you in that kind, you know your anſwer.

Beat. The fault will be in the muſick, couſin, if you be not woo'd in good time; if the Prince be too importunate, tell him there is meaſure in every thing, and ſo dance out the anſwer: for hear me, *Hero*, wooing, wedding, and repenting, is a *Scotch* jig, a meaſure, and a cinque-pace; the firſt ſuit is hot and haſty, like a *Scotch* jig, and full as fantaſtical; the wedding mannerly modeſt, as a meaſure, full of ſtate and anchentry; and then comes repentance, and with his bad legs, falls into the cinque-pace faſter and faſter, 'till he ſinks into his grave.

Leon. Couſin, you apprehend paſſing ſhrewdly.

Beat. I have a good eye, uncle, I can ſee a church by day-light.

Leon. The revellers are entring, brother; make good room.

Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, Benedick, Balthazar, *and others in Maſquerade.*

Pedro. Lady, will you walk about with your friend?

Hero. So you walk ſoftly, and look ſweetly, and ſay nothing, I am yours for the walk, and eſpecially when I walk away.

Pedro. With me in your company?

Hero. I may ſay ſo when I pleaſe.

Pedro. And when pleaſe you to ſay ſo?

Hero. When I like your favour; for God defend the lute ſhould be like the caſe.

Pedro. My viſor is *Philemon*'s roof, within the houſe is *Jove*.

Hero. Why then your viſor ſhould be thatch'd.

Pedro. Speak low, if you ſpeak love.

Balth. Well, I would you did like me.

Marg. So would not I for your own ſake, for I have many ill qualities.

Balth. Which is one?

Marg. I ſay my prayers aloud.

Balth. I love you the better, the hearers may cry Amen.

Marg. God match me with a good dancer.

Balth. Amen.

Marg.

Marg. And God keep him out of my ſight when the dance is done: anſwer clerk.

Balth No more words, the clerk is anſwer'd.

Urſu. I know you well enough, you are Signior *Antonio.*

Ant. At a word, I am not.

Urſ. I know you by the waggling of your head.

Ant. To tell you true, I counterfeit him.

Urſ. You could never do him ſo ill, well, unleſs you were the very man: here's his dry hand up and down; you are he, you are he.

Ant. At a word, I am not.

Urſ. Come, come, do you think I do not know you by your excellent wit? Can virtue hide itſelf? go to, mum, you are he; graces will appear, and there's an end.

Beat. Will you not tell me who told you ſo?

Bene. No, you ſhall pardon me.

Beat. Nor will you not tell me who you are?

Bene. Not now.

Beat. That I was diſdainful, and that I had my good wit out of the hundred merry tales; well, this was Signior *Benedick* that ſaid ſo.

Bene. What's he?

Beat. I am ſure you know him well enough.

Bene. Not I, believe me.

Beat. Did he never make you laugh?

Bene. I pray you what is he?

Beat. Why, he is the Prince's jeſter, a very dull fool, only his gift is in deviſing impoſſible ſlanders: none but libertines delight in him, and the commendation is not in his wit, but in his villany; for he both pleaſeth men and angers them, and then they laugh at him, and beat him; I am ſure he is in the fleet, I would he had boarded me.

Bene. When I know the gentleman, I'll tell him what you ſay.

Beat. Do, do; he'll but break a compariſon or two on me, which peradventure not mark'd, or not laugh'd at, ſtrikes him into melancholy, and then there's a partridge wing ſav'd, for the fool will eat no ſupper that night. We muſt follow the leaders.

Bene. In every good thing.

Beat.

Beat. Nay, if they lead to any ill, I will leave them at the next turning. [*Exeunt.*

Muſick for the Dance.

John. Sure my brother is amorous on *Hero*, and hath withdrawn her father to break with him about it; the ladies follow her, and but one viſor remains.

Bora. And that is *Claudio*, I know him by his bearing.

John. Are not you Signior *Benedick?*

Claud. You know me well, I am he.

John. Signior, you are very near my brother in his love, he is enamour'd on *Hero*; I pray you diſſuade him from her, ſhe is no equal for his birth; you may do the part of an honeſt man in it.

Claud. How know you he loves her?

John. I heard him ſwear his affection.

Bora. So did I too, and he ſwore he would marry her to-night.

John. Come let us to the banquet.

[*Exeunt* John *and* Bor.

Claud. Thus anſwer I in name of *Benedick*,
But hear this ill news with the ears of *Claudio*.
'Tis certain ſo, the prince wooes for himſelf.
Friendſhip is conſtant in all other things,
Save in the office and affairs of love;
Therefore all hearts in love uſe their own tongues,
Let every eye negotiate for itſelf,
And truſt no agent; beauty is a witch,
Againſt whoſe charms faith melteth into Blood.
This is an accident of hourly proof,
Which I miſtruſted not. Farewell then, *Hero!*

Enter Benedick.

Bene. Count *Claudio?*

Claud. Yea, the ſame.

Bene. Come, will you go with me?

Claud. Whither?

Bene. Even to the next willow, about your own buſineſs, Count. What faſhion will you wear the garland of? about your neck, like an Uſurer's chain? or under your arm, like a Lieutenant's ſcarf? you muſt wear it one way, for the Prince hath got your *Hero*.

Claud. I wiſh him joy of her.

Bene.

Bene. Why that's ſpoken like an honeſt drover: ſo they ſell bullocks: but did you think the Prince would have ſerved you thus?

Claud. I pray you leave me.

Bene. Ho! now you ſtrike like the blind man; 'twas the boy that ſtole your meat, and you'll beat the poſt.

Claud. If it will not be, I'll leave you. [*Exit.*

Bene. Alas poor hurt fowl: Now will he creep into ſedges. But that my lady *Beatrice* ſhould know me, and not know me! the Prince's fool! ha: it may be I go under that title, becauſe I am merry; yea, but ſo I am apt to do myſelf wrong: I am not ſo reputed. It is the baſe (tho' bitter) diſpoſition of *Beatrice*, that puts the world into her perſon, and ſo gives me out; well, I'll be reveng'd as I may.

Enter Don Pedro.

Pedro. Now, Signior, where's the Count? did you ſee him?

Bene. Troth, my lord, I have play'd the part of lady Fame. I found him here as melancholy as a lodge in a warren. I told him (and I think, told him true) that your Grace had got the will of this young lady, and I offer'd him my company to a willow tree either to make him a garland as being forſaken, or to bind him a rod, as being worthy to be whipt.

Pedro. To be whipt! what's his fault?

Bene. The flat tranſgreſſion of a School-boy, who being overjoy'd with finding a bird's neſt, ſhews it his companion, and he ſteals it.

Pedro. Wilt thou make a truſt, a tranſgreſſion? the tranſgreſſion is in the ſtealer.

Bene. Yet it had not been amiſs the rod had been made, and the garland too; for the garland he might have worn himſelf, and the rod he might have beſtow'd on you, who (as I take it) have ſtoll'n his bird's neſt.

Pedro. I will but teach them to ſing, and reſtore them to the owner.

Bene. If their ſinging anſwer your ſaying, by my faith you ſay honeſtly.

Pedro. The lady *Beatrice* hath a quarrel to you; the gentleman that danc'd with her, told her ſhe's much wrong'd by you.

Bene.

Bene. O ſhe miſus'd me paſt the indurance of a block; an oak but with one green leaf on it, would have anſwer'd her; my very viſor began to aſſume life, and ſcold with her? ſhe told me, not thinking I had been myſelf, that I was the Prince's jeſter, and that I was duller than a great thaw; hudling jeſt upon jeſt, with ſuch impoſſible conveyance upon me, that I ſtood like a man at a mark, with a whole army ſhooting at me; ſhe ſpeaks poinards, and every word ſtabs; if her breath were as terrible as terminations, there were no living near her, ſhe would infect to the North-Star; I would not marry her, though ſhe were endowed with all that *Adam* had left him before he tranſgreſs'd; ſhe would have made *Hercules* have turn'd ſpit, yea and have cleft his club to make the fire too. Come, talk not of her, you ſhall find her the infernal *Até* in good apparel. I would to God ſome Scholar would conjure her, for certainly while ſhe is here a man may live as quiet in hell as in a ſanctuary, and people ſin upon purpoſe, becauſe they would go thither; ſo indeed all diſquiet, horror, and perturbation follow her.

Enter Claudio, Beatrice, Leonato *and* Hero.

Ped. Look, here ſhe comes.

Bene. Will your Grace command me any ſervice to the world's end? I will go on the ſlighteſt erand now to the *Antipodes*, that you can deviſe to ſend me on; I will fetch you a tooth-picker now from the fartheſt inch of *Aſia*; bring you the length of *Preſter John*'s foot; fetch you a hair off the great *Cham*'s beard; do you any embaſſage to the pygmies; rather than hold three words conference with this harpy: you have no employment for me?

Pedro. None, but to deſire your good company.

Bene. O God, Sir, here's a diſh I love not. I cannot indure this Lady's tongue. [*Exit.*

Pedro. Come, Lady, come, you have loſt the heart of Signior *Benedick*.

Beat. Indeed, my lord, he lent it me a while, and I gave him uſe for it, a double heart for a ſingle one; marry, once before he won it of me with falſe dice, therefore your Grace may well ſay I have loſt it.

Pedro. You have put him down, lady, you have put him down.

Beat.

Beat. So I would not he ſhould do me, my Lord, leſt I ſhould prove the mother of fools: I have brought Count *Claudio*, whom you ſent me to ſeek.

Pedro. Why, how now, Count, wherefore are you ſad?

Claud. Not ſad, my Lord.

Pedro. How then? ſick?

Claud. Neither, my lord.

Beat. The Count is neither ſad, nor ſick, nor merry, nor well; but civil Count, civil as an orange, and ſome thing of a jealous complexion.

Pedro. I'faith, lady, I think your blazon to be true; though I'll be ſworn, if he be ſo, his conceit is falſe. Here, *Claudio*, I have wooed in thy name, and fair *Hero* is won; I have broke with her father, and his good-will obtained, name the day of marriage, and God give thee joy.

Leon. Count, take of me my daughter, and with her my fortunes: his Grace hath made the match, and all grace ſay Amen to it.

Beat. Speak, Count, 'tis your cue.

Claud. Silence is the perfecteſt herald of joy; I were but little happy, if I could ſay how much. Lady, as you are mine, I am yours; I give away myſelf for you, and doat upon the exchange.

Beat. Speak, Couſin, or (if you cannot) ſtop his mouth with a kiſs, and let not him ſpeak neither.

Pedro. In faith, lady, you have a merry heart.

Beat. Yea, my lord, I thank it, poor fool, it keeps on the windy ſide of care; my couſin tells him in his ear that he is in my heart.

Claud. And ſo ſhe doth, couſin.

Beat. Good Lord, for alliance! Thus goes every one to the world but I, and I am ſun-burn'd, I may ſit in a corner, and cry heigh ho for a huſband.

Pedro. Lady *Beatrice*, I will get you one.

Beat. I would rather have one of your father's getting: hath your Grace ne'er a brother like you? Your father got excellent Huſbands, if a maid could come by them.

Pedro. Will you have me, lady?

Beat. No, my Lord, unleſs I might have another for working-days; your Grace is too coſtly to wear

every

every day: but I beſeech your Grace pardon me, I was born to ſpeak all mirth and no matter.

Pedro. Your ſilence moſt offends me, and to be merry beſt becomes you; for out of queſtion you were born in a merry hour.

Beat. No, ſure, my Lord, my mother cry'd; but then there was a ſtar danc'd, and under that I was born. Couſins, God give you joy.

Leon. Niece, will you look to thoſe things I told you of?

Beat. I cry you mercy, uncle: by your Grace's pardon. [*Exit.* Beatrice.

Pedro. By my troth, a pleaſant-ſpirited lady.

Leon. There's little of the melancholy element in her, my Lord; ſhe is never ſad but when ſhe ſleeps, and not ever ſad then; for I have heard my daughter ſay, ſhe hath often dream'd of happineſs, and wak'd herſelf with laughing.

Pedro. She cannot endure to hear tell of a huſband.

Leon. O, by no means, ſhe mocks all her wooers out of ſuit.

Pedro She were an excellent wife for *Benedick.*

Leon. O Lord, my lord, if they were but a week marry'd, they would talk themſelves mad.

Pedro. Count *Claudio,* when mean you to go to church?

Claud. To-morrow, my Lord; time goes on crutches, 'till love have all its rites.

Leon. Not 'till *Monday,* my dear ſon, which is hence a juſt ſeven-night, and a time too brief too, to have all things anſwer my mind.

Pedro. Come, you ſhake the head at ſo long a breathing; but I warrant thee, *Claudio,* the time ſhall not go dully by us; I will in the *Interim* undertake one of *Hercules*'s labours, which is to bring Signior *Benedick* and the lady *Beatrice* into a mountain of affection the one with the other; I would fain have it a match, and I doubt not to faſhion it, if you three will but miniſter ſuch aſſiſtance as I ſhall give you direction.

Leon. My Lord, I am for you, though it coſt me ten nights watchings.

Claud.

Claud. And I, my Lord.

Pedro. And you too, gentle *Hero?*

Hero. I will do any modeſt office, my lord, to help my couſin to a good huſband.

Pearo. And *Benedick* is not the unhopefulleſt huſband that I know; thus far I can praiſe him, he is of a noble ſtrain, of approv'd valour, and confirm'd honeſty. I will teach you how to humour your couſin, that ſhe ſhall fall in love with *Benedick*; and I, with your two helps, will ſo practiſe on *Benedick*; that in deſpite of his quick wit, and his queaſy ſtomach, he ſhall fall in love with *Beatrice:* if we can do this, *Cupid* is no longer an archer, his glory ſhall be ours, for we are the only Love-Gods; go in with me, and I will tell you my drift. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Don John and Borachio.

John. Is it ſo, the Count *Claudio* ſhall marry the Daughter of *Leonato?*

Bora. Yea, my lord, but I can croſs it.

John. Any bar, any croſs, any impediment will be medicinable to me; I am ſick in diſpleaſure to him, and whatſoever comes athwart his affection, ranges evenly with mine. How canſt thou croſs his marriage?

Bora. Not honeſtly, my lord, but ſo covertly that no diſhoneſty ſhall appear in me.

John. Shew me briefly how.

Bora. I think I told your lordſhip a year ſince, how much I am in the favour of *Margaret*, the waiting gentlewoman to *Hero.*

John. I remember.

Bora. I can, at any unſeaſonable inſtant of the night, appoint her to look out at her Lady's chamber window.

John. What life is in that, to be the death of this marriage?

Bora. The poiſon of that lies in you to temper; go you to the Prince your brother, ſpare not to tell him, that he hath wrong'd his honour in marrying the renown'd *Claudio*, (whoſe eſtimation do you mightily hold up) to a contaminated ſtale, ſuch a one as *Hero.*

John. What proof ſhall I make of that?

Bora. Proof enough, to misuse the Prince, to vex *Claudio*, to undo *Hero*, and kill *Leonato*; look you for any other issue?

John. Only to despite them, I will endeavour any thing.

Bora. Go then find me a meet hour, to draw Don *Pedro*, and the Count *Claudio*, alone; tell them that you know *Hero* loves me; intend a kind of zeal both to the Prince and *Claudio*, as in love of your brother's honour who hath made this match, (and his friend's reputation, who is thus like to be cozen'd with the semblance of a maid,) that you have discover'd thus; they will hardly believe this without tryal: offer them instances, which shall bear no less likelihood than to see me at her chamber-window, hear me call *Margaret*, *Hero*; hear *Margaret* term me *Borachio*, and bring them to see this, the very night before the intended wedding; for in the mean time I will so fashion the matter, that *Hero* shall be absent, and there shall appear such seeming truths of *Hero's* disloyalty, that jealousy shall be call'd assurance, and all the preparation overthrown.

John. Grow this to what adverse issue it can, I will put it in practice: be cunning in the working this and thy fee is a thousand ducats.

Bora. Be thou constant in the accusation, and my cunning shall not shame me.

John. I will presently go learn their day of marriage. [*Exeunt.*

LEONATO's *GARDEN.*

Enter Benedick *and a Boy.*

Bene. Boy.

Boy. Signior.

Bene. In my chamber window lies a book, bring it hither to me in the orchard.

Boy. I am here already, Sir. [*Exit Boy.*

Bene. I know that, but I would have thee hence, and here again. I do much wonder, that one man seeing how much another man is a fool, when he dedicates his behaviours to love, will, after he hath laught at such shallow follies in others, become the argument of his own scorn, by falling in love! and such a man is *Claudio*. I have known when there was no musick

with him but the drum and the fife, and now had he rather hear the taber and the pipe: I have known when he would have walk'd ten mile o-foot, to see a good armour; and now will he lie ten nights awake, carving the fashion of a new doublet. He was wont to speak plain, and to the purpose, like an honest man and a soldier, and now is he turn'd orthographer, his words are a very fantastical banquet, just so many strange dishes. May I be so converted, and see with these eyes? I cannot tell, I think not. I will not be sworn, but love may transform me to an oyster; but I'll take my oath on it, 'till he have made an oyster of me, he shall never make me such a fool; one woman is fair, yet I am well; another is wise, yet I am well; another virtuous, yet I am well. But 'till all graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace. Rich she shall be, that's certain; wise, or I'll none; virtuous, or I'll never cheapen her; fair, or I'll never look on her; mild, or come not near me; noble, or not I for an angel; of good discourse, an excellent musician, and her hair shall be of what colour it please God. Ha! the Prince and monsieur Love: I will hide me in the arbour.

Enter Don Pedro, Leonato, Claudio *and* Balthazar.

Pedro. Come, shall we hear this musick?

Claud. Yea, my good lord; how still the evening is?
As hush'd on purpose to grace harmony.

Pedro. See you where *Benedick* hath hid himself?

Claud. O very well, my lord; the musick ended,
We'll fit the kid-fox with a penny-worth.

Pedro. Come, *Balthazar*, we'll hear that song again.

Balth. O good my lord, tax not so bad a voice
To slander musick any more than once.

Pedro. It is the witness still of excellency,
To put a strange face on his own perfection;
I pray thee sing, and let me woo no more.

The SONG.

Sigh no more, ladies sigh no more,
Men were deceivers ever,
One foot in sea, and one on shoore,
To one thing constant never.

Then

Then ſigh not ſo, but let them go,
And be you blith and bonny,
Converting all your ſounds of woe
Into hey nony, nony.

Sing no more ditties, ſing no more,
Of dumps ſo dull and heavy;
The frauds of men were ever ſo,
Since ſummer firſt was leafy:
Then ſigh not ſo, &c.

Pedro. By my troth, a good ſong.

Balth. And an ill ſinger, my lord.

Pedro, Ha, no; no, faith, thou ſing'ſt well enough for a ſhift.

Bene. If he had been a dog that ſhould have howl'd thus they would have hang'd him, and I pray God his bad voice bode no miſchief; I had as lief have heard the night-raven, come what plague could have come after it

Pedro. Yea, marry, doſt thou hear, *Balthazar?* I pray thee get us ſome excellent muſick; for to-morrow we would have it at the lady *Hero*'s chamber-window.

Balth. The beſt I can, my lord. [*Exit* Balthazar.

Pedro. Do ſo; farewell. Come hither, *Leonato*! what was it you told me of to-day, that your neice *Beatrice* was in love with Signior *Benedick?*

Claud. O ay, ſtalk on; ſtalk on, the fowl ſits. I did never think that lady would have loved any man

Leon. No, nor I neither; but moſt wonderful, that ſhe ſhould ſo doat on Signior *Benedick*, whom ſhe hath in all outward behaviour ſeem'd ever to abhor.

Bene. Is't poſſible, ſits the wind in that corner?

Leon. By my troth, my lord, I cannot tell what to think of it; but that ſhe loves him with an inraged affection, it is paſt the infinite of thought.

Pedro. May be ſhe doth but counterfeit.

Claud. Faith, like enough.

Leon. O God! counterfeit? there was never counterfeit of paſſion came ſo near the life of paſſion as ſhe diſcovers it.

Pedro. Why, what effects of paſſion ſhews ſhe?

Claud. Bait the hook well, the fiſh will bite.

Leon. What effects, my lord? she will sit you: you heard my daughter tell you how.

Claud. She did indeed.

Pedro. How, how, I pray you? you amaze me, I would have thought her spirit had been invincible against all assaults of affection.

Leon. I would have sworn it had, my lord, especially against *Benedick.*

Bene. I should think this a gull, but that the white-bearded fellow speaks it; knavery cannot sure hide himself in such reverence.

Claud. He hath ta'en th' infection, hold it up.

Pedro. Hath she made her affection known to *Benedick?*

Leon. No, and swears she never will, that's her torment.

Claud. 'Tis true indeed, so your daughter says: shall I, says she, that have so oft encounter'd him with scorn, write to him that I love him?

Leon. This says she now, when she is beginning to write to him; for she'll be up twenty times a-night, and there will she sit in her smock, 'till she have writ a sheet of paper: my daughter tells us all.

Claud. Now you talk of a sheet of paper, I remember a pretty jest your daughter told us of.

Leon. O, when she had writ it, and was reading it over, she found *Benedick* and *Beatrice* between the sheet.

Claud. That——

Leon. O, she tore the letter into a thousand halfpence, rail'd at herself, that she should be so immodest, to write to one that she knew would flout her: I measure him, says she, by my own spirit, for I should flout him if he writ to me, yea tho' I love him, I should.

Claud. Then down upon her knees she falls, weeps, sobs, beats her heart, tears her hair, prays, curses; O sweet *Benedick!* God give me patience!

Leon. She doth indeed, my daughter says so, and the ecstasy hath so much overborne her, that my daughter is sometimes afraid she will do desperate outrage to herself; it is very true.

Pedro.

Pedro. It were good that *Benedick* knew of it by ſome other, if ſhe will not diſcover it.

Claud. To what end? he would but make a ſport of it, and torment the poor lady worſe.

Pedro. If he ſhould, it were an alms to hang him; ſhe's an excellent ſweet lady, and (out of all ſuſpicion) ſhe is virtuous.

Claud. And ſhe is exceeding wiſe.

Pedro. In every thing but in loving *Benedick.*

Leon. O my lord, wiſdom and blood combating in ſo tender a body, we have ten proofs to one, that blood hath the victory; I am ſorry for her, as I have juſt cauſe, being her uncle and her guardian.

Pedro. I would ſhe had beſtow'd this dotage on me; I would have doſſt all other reſpects, and made her half myſelf; I pray you tell *Benedick* of it, and hear what he will ſay

Leon. Were it good, think you?

Claud. Hero thinks ſurely ſhe will die, for ſhe ſays ſhe will die if he love her not, and ſhe will die ere ſhe make her love known; and ſhe will die if he woo her, rather than ſhe will bate one breath of her accuſtom'd croſſneſs.

Pedro. She doth well; if ſhe ſhould make tender of her love, 'tis very poſſible he'll ſcorn it; for the man as you know all, hath a contemptible ſpirit.

Claud. He is a very proper man.

Pedro. He hath indeed a good outward happineſs.

Claud. 'Fore God, and in my mind, very wiſe.

Pedro. He doth indeed ſhew ſome ſparks that are like wit.

Leon. And I take him to be valiant.

Pedro. As *Hector*, I aſſure you; and in the managing of quarrels, you may ſee he is wiſe, for either he avoids them with great diſcretion, or undertakes them with a chriſtian-like fear. Well, I am ſorry for your neice: ſhall we go ſee *Benedick*, and tell him of her love?

Claud. Never tell him, my lord, let her wear it out with good counſel.

Leon. Nay, that's impoſſible, ſhe may wear her heart out firſt.

Pedro. Well, we will hear further of it by your daughter; let it cool the while. I love *Benedick* well, and I could wish he would modestly examine himself, to see how much he is unworthy to have so good a lady.

Leon. My lord, will you walk? dinner is ready.

Claud. If he do not doat on her upon this, I will never trust my expectation.

Pedro. Let there be the same net spread for her, and that must your daughter and that gentlewoman carry; the sport will be, when they hold an opinion of one another's dotage, and no such matter; that's the scene that I would see, which will be merely a dumb shew; let us send her to call him in to dinner. [*Exeunt.*

Bene. This can be no trick, the conference was sadly borne; they have the truth of this from *Hero*, they seem to pity the lady; it seems her affections have the full bent. Love me! why it must be requited: I hear how I am censured; they say I will bear myself proudly, if I perceive the love come from her; they say too, that she will rather die than give any sign of affection———I did never think to marry——I must not seem proud——happy are they that hear their detractions, and can put them to mending: they say the lady is fair; 'tis a truth, I can bear them witness: and virtuous; 'tis so, I cannot reprove it: and wise, but for loving me——by my troth it is no addition to her wit, nor no great argument of her folly; for I will be horribly in love with her,——I may chance to have some odd quirks and remnants of wit broken on me, because I have rail'd so long against marriage; but doth not the appetite alter? a man loves the meat in his youth, that he cannot endure in his age. Shall quipps and sentences, and these paper bullets of the brain, awe a man from the career of his humour? no: the world must be peopled. When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live 'till I were marry'd. Here comes *Beatrice:* by this day she's a fair lady, I do spy some marks of love in her.

Enter Beatrice.

Beat. Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner.

Bene.

Bene. Fair *Beatice*, I thank you for your pains.

Beat. I took no more pains for thoſe thanks, than you take pains to thank me; if it had been painful, I would not have come.

Bene. You take pleaſure then in the meſſage.

Beat. Yea, juſt ſo much as you may take upon a knife's point, and choak a daw withal: you have no ſtomach, Signior; fare you well, [*Exit.*

Bene. Ha! againſt my will I am ſent to bid you come in to dinner: there's a double meaning in that. I took no more pains for thoſe thanks, than you took pains to thank me; that's as much as to ſay, any pains that I take for you is as eaſy as thanks. If I do not take pity of her, I am a villain; if I do not love her, I am a *Jew*; I will go get her picture. [*Exit.*

ACT III. SCENE I.

Continues in the Garden.

Enter Hero, Margaret *and* Urſula.

HERO.

GOOD *Margaret*, run thee into the parlour,
There ſhalt thou find my couſin *Beatrice*,
Propoſing with the prince and *Claudio*;
Whiſper her ear, and tell her I and *Urſula*
Walk in the orchard, and our whole diſcourſe
Is all of her; ſay that thou overheard'ſt us,
And bid her ſteal into the pleached bower,
Where honey ſuckles ripen'd by the ſun
Forbid the ſun to enter; like to favourites
Made proud by princes, that advance their pride
Againſt that power that bred it: there will ſhe hide her
To liſten to our purpoſe; this is thy office,
Bear thee well in it, and leave us alone.

Marg. I'll make her come, I warrant, preſently. [*Exit Hero.*

Hero. Now, *Urſula*, when *Beatrice* doth come,
As we do trace this alley up and down,
Our talk muſt only be of *Benedick*;
When I do name him, let it be thy part
To praiſe him more than ever man did merit.
My talk to thee muſt be how *Benedick*
Is ſick in love with *Beatrice*; of this matter
Is little *Cupid*'s crafty arrow made,
That only wounds by hear-ſay: now begin.

Enter Beatrice.

For look where *Beatrice* like a lapwing runs
Cloſe by the ground to hear our conference.

Urſu. The pleaſant'ſt angling is to ſee the fiſh
Cut with her golden oars the ſilver ſtream,
And greedily devour the treacherous bait;
So angle we for *Beatrice*, who ev'n now
Is couched in the woodbine coverture;
Fear you not my part of the dialogue.

Hero. Then go we near her, that her ear loſe nothing
Of the falſe ſweet bait that we lay for it.
No truly, *Urſula*, ſhe's too diſdainful,
I know her ſpirits are as coy and wild,
As † haggerds of the rock.

Urſu. But are you ſure
That *Benedick* loves *Beatrice* ſo intirely?

Hero. So ſays the prince, and my new trothed lord.

Urſu. And did they bid you tell her of it, Madam?

Hero. They did intreat me to acquaint her of it;
But I perſuaded them, if they lov'd *Benedick*,
To wiſh him wreſtle with affection,
And never to let *Beatrice* know of it.

Urſu. Why did you ſo? doth not the gentleman
Deſerve as full, as fortunate a bed,
As ever *Beatrice* ſhall couch upon?

Hero. O God of love! I know he doth deſerve
As much as may be yeilded to a man;
But nature never fram'd a woman's heart
Of prouder ſtuff than that of *Beatrice*.
Diſdain and ſcorn ride ſparkling in her eyes,
Miſ-prizing what they look on, and her wit
Values itſelf ſo highly, that to her
All matter elſe ſeems weak; ſhe cannot love,

† *Wild hawks*

Nor take no ſhape nor project of affection,
She is ſo ſelf-endeared.
Urſu. Sure I think ſo;
And therefore certainly it were not good
She knew is love, leſt ſhe make ſport at it.
Hero. Why, you ſpeak truth. I never yet ſaw man,
How wiſe, how noble, young, how rarely featur'd,
But ſhe would ſpell him backward: if fair-fac'd,
She'd ſwear the gentleman ſhould be her ſiſter;
If black, why nature drawing of an antick.
Made a foul blot; if tall, a lance ill-headed;
If low, an agat very vilely cut;
If ſpeaking, why, a vane blown with all winds;
If ſilent, why, a block moved with none.
So turns ſhe every man the wrong ſide out,
And never gives to truth and virtue that
Which ſimpleneſs and merit purchaſeth.
Urſu. Sure, ſure ſuch carping is not commendable.
Hero. No, for to be ſo odd, and from all faſhions,
As *Beatrice* is, cannot be commendable.
But who dare tell her ſo? if I ſhould ſpeak,
She'd mock me into air, O ſhe would laugh me
Out of myſelf, preſs me to death with wit.
Therefore let *Benedick*, like covered fire,
Conſume away in ſighs, waſte inwardly;
It were a bitter death to die with mocks,
Which is as bad as 'tis to die with tickling.
Urſu. Yet tell her of it; hear what ſhe will ſay.
Hero. No, rather I will go to *Benedick*,
And counſel him to fight againſt his paſſion.
And truly I'll deviſe ſome honeſt ſlanders
To ſtain my conſin with; one doth not know
How much an ill word may impoiſon liking.
Urſu. O do not do your couſin ſuch a wrong.
She cannot be ſo much without true judgment,
(Having ſo ſweet and excellent a wit,
As ſhe is priz'd to have) as to refuſe
So rare a gentleman as *Benedick*.
Hero. He is the only man of *Italy*,
Always excepted my dear *Claudio*.
Urſu. I pray you be not angry with me, Madam,
Speaking my fancy; Signior *Benedick*,

For ſhape, for bearing, argument and valour,
Goes foremoſt in report through *Italy*.

Hero. Indeed he hath an excellent good name.

Urſu. His excellence did earn it ere he had it.
When are you married, Madam?

Hero. Why every day, to morrow; come, go in,
I'll ſhew thee ſome attires, and have thy counſel
Which is the beſt to furniſh me to-morrow.

Urſu. She's ta'en, I warrant you; we have caught her, Madam.

Hero. If it prove ſo, then loving goes by haps;
Some *Cupids* kill with arrows, ſome with traps. [*Exeunt.*

Beat. What fire is in my ears? can this be true?
Stand I condemn'd for pride and ſcorn ſo much?
Contempt farewell, and maiden pride adieu!
No glory lives behind the back of ſuch,
And, *Benedick*, love on, I will requite thee,
Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand;
If thou doſt love, my kindneſs ſhall incite thee
To bind our loves up in an holy band.
For others ſay thou doſt deſerve, and I
Believe it better than reportingly. [*Exit.*

Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, Benedick *and* Leonato.

Pedro. I do but ſtay 'till your marriage be conſumate, and then I go toward *Arragon*.

Claud. I'll bring you thither, my lord, if you'll vouchſafe me.

Pedro Nay, that would be as great a ſoil in the new gloſs of your marriage, as to ſhew a child his new coat and forbid him to wear it. I will only be bold with *Benedick* for his company, for from the crown of his head to the ſoal of his foot he is all mirth; he hath twice or thrice cut *Cupid*'s bow-ſtring, and the little hangman dare not ſhoot at him; he hath a heart as ſound as a bell, and his tongue is the clapper; for what his heart thinks, his tongue ſpeaks.

Bene. Gallants, I am not as I have been.

Leon. So ſay I; methinks you are ſadder.

Claud. I hope he is in love.

Pedro. Hang him truant, there'e no true drop of blood in him, to be truly touch'd with love; if he be ſad, he wants money. *Bene.*

Bene. I have the tooth-ach.

Pedro. Draw it.

Bene. Hang it.

Claud. You muſt hang it firſt, and draw it afterwards.

Pedro. What? ſigh for the tooth-ach!

Leon. Which is but a humour, or a worm.

Bene. Well, every one can maſter a grief but he that has it.

Claud. Yet ſay I he is in love.

Pedro. There is no appearance of fancy in him, unleſs it be a fancy that he hath to ſtrange diſguiſes, as to be a *Dutch* man to day, a *French* man to-morrow. Or in the ſhape of two countries at once, a *German* from the waſte downward, all ſlops, and a *Spaniard* from the hip upward, no doublet: Unleſs he have a fancy to this foolery, as it appears he hath, he is no fool for fancy, as you would have it to appear he is.

Claud. If he be not in love with ſome woman, there is no believing old ſigns; he bruſhes his hat a mornings; what ſhould that bode?

Pedro. Hath any man ſeen him at the barber's?

Claud. No, but the barber's man hath been ſeen with him, and the old ornament of his cheek hath already ſtuft tennis balls.

Leon. Indeed he looks younger than he did by the loſs of a beard.

Pedro. Nay, he rubs himſelf with civet; can you ſmell him out by that?

Claud. That's as much as to ſay, the ſweet youth's in love.

Pedro. The greateſt not of it is his melancholy.

Claud. And when was he wont to waſh his face?

Pedro. Yea, or to paint himſelf? for the which I hear what they ſay of him.

Claud. Nay, but his jeſting ſpirit, which is now crept into a lute ſtring, and now govern'd by ſtops——

Pedro. Indeed that tells a heavy tale for him. Conclude he is in love.

Claud. Nay, but I know who loves him.

Pedro. That would I know too: I warrant one that knows him not.

Claud. Yes, and his ill conditions, and in deſpight of all, dies for him.

Pedro. She ſhall be buried with her face upwards.

Bene. Yet is this no charm for the tooth ach. Old Signior, walk aſide with me, I have ſtudied eight or nine wiſe words to ſpeak to you, which theſe hobby-horſes muſt not hear.

Pedro. For my life, to break with him about *Beatrice.*

Claud. 'Tis even ſo. *Hero* and *Margaret* have by this play'd their parts with *Beatrice*, and then the two bears will not bite one another when they meet.

Enter Don John.

John. My lord and brother, God ſave you.

Pedro. Good den, brother.

John. If your leiſure ſerv'd, I would ſpeak with you.

Pedro. In private?

John. If it pleaſe you; yet Count *Claudio* may hear, for what I would ſpeak of concerns him.

Pedro. What's the matter?

John. Means your lordſhip to be married to-morrow? [*To* Claudio.

Pedro. You know he does.

John. I know not that, when he knows what I know.

Claud. If there be any impediment, I pray you, diſcover it.

John. You may think I love you not, let that appear hereafter, and aim better at me by that I now will manifeſt; for my brother, I think, he holds you well, and in dearneſs of heart hath holp to effect your enſuing marriage; ſurely, ſuit ill ſpent, and labour ill beſtow'd.

Pedro. Why, what's the matter?

John. I came hither to tell you, and circumſtances ſhorten'd, (for ſhe hath been too long a talking of) the lady is diſloyal.

Claud. Who, *Hero?*

John. Even ſhe, *Leonato*'s *Hero*, your *Hero*, every man's *Hero?*

Claud. Diſloyal?

John. The word is too good to paint out her wickedneſs; I could ſay ſhe were worſe; think you of a worſe

worſe title, and I will fit her to it: wonder not 'till further warrant; go but with me to-night, you ſhall ſee her chamber-window enter'd, even the night before her wedding day; if you love her, then to morrow wed her; but it would better fit your honour to change your mind.

Claud. May this be ſo?

Pedro. I will not think it.

John. If you dare not truſt that you ſee, confeſs not that you know; if will you follow me, I will ſhew you enough; and when you have ſeen more and heard more, proceed accordingly.

Claud. If I ſee any thing to-night why I ſhou'd not marry her to-morrow, in the congregatian where I ſhould wed, there will I ſhame her.

Pedro. And as I wooed for thee to obtain her, I will join with thee to diſgrace her.

John. I will diſparage her no farther, 'till you are my witneſſes; bear it coldly but 'till night, and let the iſſue ſhew itſelf.

Pedro. O day untowardly turned!

Claud. O miſchief ſtrangely thwarting!

John. O plaugue right well prevented!

So will you ſay when you have ſeen the ſequel.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE, *The Street.*

Enter Dogberry *and* Verges, *with the watch.*

Dog. Are you good men and true?

Verg. Yea, or elſe it were pity but they ſhould ſuffer ſalvation, body and ſoul.

Dogb. Nay, that were a puniſhment too good for them, if they ſhould have any allegiance in them, being choſen for the Prince's watch.

Verg. Well, give them their charge, neighbour *Dogberry.*

Dogb. Firſt, who think you the moſt diſartleſs man to be conſtable?

1 *Watch. Hugh Oatcake,* Sir, or *George Seacoal*; for they can write and read.

Dogb. Come hither, neighbour *Seacoal:* God hath bleſt you with a good name; to be a well-favour'd man

is

is the gift of fortune, but to write and read comes by nature.

2 *Watch.* Both which, maſter conſtable———

Dogb. You have: I knew it would be your anſwer. Well, for your favour, Sir, why, give God thanks, and make no boaſt of it; and for your writing and reading, let that appear when there is no need of ſuch vanity: you are thought here to be the moſt ſenſeleſs and fit man for the conſtable of the watch, therefore bear you the lanthorn; this is your charge; you ſhall comprehend all vagrom men, you are to bid any man ſtand in the Prince's name.

2 *Watch.* How, if he will not ſtand?

Dogb. Why then take no note of him, but let him go, and preſently call the reſt of the watch together, and thank God you are rid of a knave.

Verg. If he will not ſtand when he is bidden, he is none of the Prince's ſubjects.

Dogb. True, and they are to meddle with none but the Prince's ſubjects: you ſhall alſo make no noiſe in the ſtreets; for, for the watch to babble and talk, is moſt intolerable, and not to be endur'd.

2 *Watch.* We will rather ſleep than talk; we know what belongs to a watch.

Dogb. Why you ſpeak like an ancient and moſt quiet watchman, for I cannot ſee how ſleeping ſhould offend; only have a care that your bills be not ſtolen: well, you are to call at all the alehouſes, and bid them that are drunk get them to bed.

2 *Watch.* How if they will not?

Dogb. Why then let them alone 'till they are ſober; if they make you not then the better anſwer, you may ſay they are not the men you took them for.

2 *Watch.* Well, Sir.

Dogb. If you meet a thief, you may ſuſpect him by virtue of your office to be no true man; and for ſuch kind of men, the leſs you meddle or make with them, why, the more is for your honeſty.

2 *Watch.* If we know him to be a thief, ſhall we not lay hands on him?

Dogb. Truly by your office you may; but I think they that touch pitch will be defil'd, the moſt peace-

able

able way for you, if you do take a thief, is to let him ſhew himſelf what he is, and ſteal out of your company.

Verg. You have been always call'd a merciful man, partner.

Dogb. Truly I would not hang a dog by my will, much more a man who hath any honeſty in him.

Verg. If you hear a child cry in the night, you muſt call to the nurſe and bid her ſtill it.

2 *Watch.* How if the nurſe be aſleep, and will not hear us?

Dogb. Why then depart in peace, and let the child wake her with crying: for a ewe that will not hear her lamb when it baes, will never anſwer a calf when he bleats.

Verg. 'Tis very true.

Dogb. This is the end of the charge: you, conſtable, are to preſent the Prince's own perſon, if you meet the Prince in the night you may ſtay him.

Verg. Nay bi'rlady, that I think he cannot.

Dogb. Five ſhillings to one on't with any man that knows the Statues, he may ſtay him; marry, not without the Prince be willing: for indeed the watch ought to offend no man; and it is an offence to ſtay a man againſt his will.

Verg. Bi'rlady, I think it be ſo.

Dogb. Ha, ha, ha! well maſters, good night; an there be any matter of weight chances, call up me; keep your fellows' council and your own, and good night; come neighbour.

2 *Watch.* Well, maſters, we hear our charge; let us go ſit here upon the church-bench 'till two, and then all to bed.

Dogb. One word more, honeſt neighbours. I pray you watch about Signior *Leonato*'s door, for the wedding being there to-morrow, there is a great coil to-night; adieu; be vigilant, I beſeech you.

[*Exeunt* Dogb. *and* Verg.

Enter Borachio *and* Conrade.

Bora. What, *Conrade?*

Watch. Peace, ſtir not. [*Aſide.*

Bora. Conrade, I ſay.

Conr. Here, man, I am at thy elbow.

Bora.

Bora. Mafs and my elbow itch'd, I thought there would a fcab follow.

Conr. I will owe thee an anfwer for that, and now forward with thy tale.

Bora. Stand thee clofe then under this pent-houfe, for it drizles rain, and I will, like a true drunkard, utter all to thee.

Watch. Some treafon, maflers; yet ftand clofe.

Bora. Therefore know, I have earned of Don *John* a thoufand ducats.

Conr. Is it poffible that any villainy fhould be fo dear?

Bora. Thou fhould'ft rather afk if it were poffible any villainy fhould be fo rich! for when rich villains have need of poor ones, poor ones may make what price they will.

Conr. I wonder at it.

Bora. That fhews thou art unconfirm'd; thou knoweft that the fafhion of a doublet, or a hat, or a cloak, is nothing to a man.

Conr. Yes, it is apparel.

Bora. I mean the fafhion.

Conr. Yes, the fafhion is the fafhion.

Bora. Tufh, I may as well fay the fool's the fool; but feeft thou not what a deformed thief this fafhion is?

Watch. I know that *Deformed*; he has been a vile thief this feven years; he goes up and down like a gentleman: I remember his name.

Bora. Didft thou not hear fome body?

Conr. No, 'twas the vane on the houfe.

Bora. Seeft thou not, I fay, what a deformed thief this fafhion is, how giddily he turns about all the hot bloods between fourteen and five and thirty, fometimes fafhioning them like *Pharaoh*'s foldiers in the * rechy painting, fometimes like the God *Bell*'s prieffs in the old church-window, fometimes like the fhaven *Hercules* in the fmirch'd worm eaten tapeftry, where his codpiece feems as maffy as his club

Conr. All this I fee, and fee that the fafhion wears out more apparel than the man; but art not thou thyfelf giddy with the fafhion, that thou haft fhifted out of thy tale into telling me of the fafhion?

Bora. Not fo neither; but know that I have to-night wooed *Margaret*, the lady *Hero*'s gentlewoman,

* *rechy*, valuable.

by

by the Name of *Hero*; she leans me out at her mistress's chamber-window, bids me a thousand times good night ——I tell this tale vilely——I should first tell thee how the Prince, *Claudio*, and my master planted and placed, and possessed by my master Don *John*, saw far off in the orchard this amiable encounter.

Conr. And thought they, *Margaret* was *Hero?*

Bora. Two of them did, the Prince and *Claudio*, but the devil my master knew she was *Margaret*; and partly by his oaths which first possest them, partly by the dark night which did deceive them, but chiefly by my villainy, which did confirm any slander that Don *John* had made; away went *Claudio* enraged, swore he would meet her as he was appointed next morning at the temple, and there before the whole congregation shame her with what he saw o'er night, and send her home again without a husband.

1 *Watch.* We charge you in the Prince's name stand.

2 *Watch.* Call up the right master constable, we have here recovered the most dangerous piece of lechery that ever was known in the common-wealth.

1 *Watch.* And one *Deformed* is one of them; I know him, he wears a lock.

Conr. Masters, masters.

2 *Watch.* You'll be made bring *Deformed* forth, I warrant you.

Conr. Masters ——

1 *Watch.* Never speak, we charge you, let us obey you to go with us.

Bora. We are like to prove a goodly commodity, being taken up of these mens bills.

Conr. A commodity in question, I warrant you: come, we'll obey you. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE, Leonato's *House.*

Enter Hero, Margaret *and* Ursula.

Hero. Good *Ursula*, wake my cousin *Beatrice*, and desire her to rise.

Ursu. I will, lady.

Hero. And bid her come hither.

Ursu. Well.

Marg. Troth I think your other rabato were better.

Hero. No, pray thee, good *Meg*, I'll wear this.

Marg. By my troth, it's not so good, and I warrant your cousin will say so. *Hero.*

Hero. My couſin's a fool, and thou art another. I'll wear none but this.

Marg. I like the new tire within excellently, if the hair were a thought browner; and your gown's a moſt rare faſhion i'faith. I ſaw the Duchefs of *Milan*'s gown that they praiſe ſo.

Hero. O, that exceeds, they ſay.

Marg. By my troth, it's but a night-gown in reſpect of yours; cloth of gold and cuts, and lac'd with ſilver, ſet with pearls, down ſleeves, ſide ſleeves, and ſkirts, round, underborne with a bluiſh tinſel; but for a fine, queint, graceful and excellent faſhion, yours is worth ten on't.

Hero. God give me joy to wear it, for my heart is exceeding heavy.

Marg. 'Twill be heavier ſoon by the weight of a man.

Hero. Fie upon thee, art not aſham'd?

Marg. Of what, lady? of ſpeaking honourably! is not marriage honourable in a beggar? is not your lord honourable without marriage? I think you would have me ſay (ſaving your reverence) a huſband. If bad thinking do not wreſt true ſpeaking, I'll offend no body; is there any harm in the heavier for a huſband? none I think, if it be the right huſband, and the right wife, otherwiſe 'tis light and not heavy; aſk my lady *Beatrice* elſe, here ſhe comes.

Enter Beatrice.

Hero. Good morrow, coz.

Beat. Good morrow, ſweet *Hero.*

Hero. Why, how now? do you ſpeak in the ſick tune?

Beat. I am out of all other tune, methinks.

Marg. Clap us into *Light o'love*; that goes without a burden; do you ſing it, and I'll dance it.

Beat. Yes, light o'love with your heels; then if your huſband have ſtables enough, you'll look he ſhall lack no barns.

Marg. O illegimate conſtruction! I ſcorn that with my heels.

Beat. 'Tis almoſt five a clock, couſin; 'tis time you were ready; by my troth I am exceeding ill, hey ho!

Marg. For a hawk, a horſe, or a huſband?

Beat.

Beat. For the letter that begins them all, H.

Marg. Well, if you be not turn'd *Turk*, there's no more ſailing by the ſtar.

Beat. What means the fool, trow?

Marg. Nothing I, but God ſend every one their heart's deſire.

Hero. Theſe gloves the Count ſent me, they are an excellent perfume.

Beat. I am ſtuft, couſin, I cannot ſmell.

Marg. A maid and ſtuft! there's a goodly catching of cold.

Beat. O God help me, God help me, how long have you profeſt apprehenſion?

Marg. Ever ſince you left it; doth not my wit become me rarely?

Beat. It is not ſeen enough, you ſhould wear it in your cap. By my troth, I am ſick.

Marg. Get you ſome of this diſtill'd *Carduus Benedictus*, and lay it to your heart, it is the only thing for a qualm.

Hero. There thou prick'ſt her with a thiſtle.

Beat. *Benedictus?* why *Benedictus?* you have ſome moral in this *Benedictus*.

Marg. Moral? no by my troth, I have no moral meaning, I meant plain holy thiſtle; you may think perchance that I think you are in love, nay, bi'rlady, I am not ſuch a fool to think what I liſt; nor I liſt not to think what I can, nor indeed I cannot think, if I would think my heart out with thinking, that you are in love, or that you will be in love, or that you can be in love: yet *Benedick* was ſuch another, and now is he become a man; he ſwore he would never marry, and yet now in deſpight of his heart he eats his meat without grudging; and how you may be converted I know not, but methinks you look with your eyes as other women do.

Beat. What pace is this that thy tongue keeps?

Marg. Not a falſe gallop.

Urſu. Madam, withdraw, the prince, the Count Signior *Benedick*, Don *John*, and all the gallants of the town are come to fetch you to church.

Hero. Help to dreſs me, good coz, good *Meg*, good *Urſula*. [*Exeunt.*

Enter

Enter Leonato *with* Dogberry *and* Verges.

Leon. What would you with me, honeſt neighbour?

Dogb. Marry Sir, I would have ſome confidence with you that decerns you nearly.

Leon. Brief I pray you, for you ſee 'tis a buſy time with me.

Dogb. Marry, this it is, Sir.

Verg. Yes in truth it is, Sir.

Leon. What is it, my good friends?

Dogb. Goodman *Verges*, Sir, ſpeaks a little of the matter; an old man, Sir, and his wits are not ſo blunt, as God help I would deſire they were, but in faith as honeſt as the ſkin between his brows.

Verg. Yes, I thank God, I am as honeſt as any man living, that is an old man and no honeſter than I.

Dogb. Comparifons are odorous, palabras, neighbour *Verges*.

Leon. Neighbours, you are tedious.

Dogb. It pleaſes your worſhip to ſay ſo, but we are the poor Duke's officers; but truly for mine own part, if I were as tedious as a King, I could find in my heart to beſtow it all to your worſhip.

Leon. All thy tediouſneſs on me, ha?

Dogb. Yea, and twice a thouſand times more than 'tis, for I hear as good exclamation on your worſhip as of any man in the city; and tho' I be put a poor man, I am glad to hear it.

Verg. And ſo am I.

Leon. I would fain know what you have to ſay.

Verg. Marry, Sir, our watch to night, excepting your worſhip's preſence, hath ta'en a couple as arrant knaves as any in *Meſſina*.

Dogb. A good old man, Sir, he will be talking as they ſay; when the age is in, the wit is out, God help us, it is a world to ſee: well ſaid i'faith, neighbour *Verges*, well, he's a good man; and two men ride an horſe, one muſt ride behind; an honeſt ſoul, i'faith, Sir, by my troth he is, as ever broke bread, but God is to be worſhipp'd; all men are not alike, alas good neighbour!

Leon. Indeed, neighbour, he comes too ſhort of you.

Dogb. Gifts that God gives.

Leon. I muſt leave you.

Dogb.

Dogb. One word, Sir; our watch have indeed comprehended two auſpicious perſons, and we would have them this morning examined before your worſhip.

Leon. Take their examination yourſelf, and bring it me, I am now in great haſte as may appear unto you.

Dogb. It ſhall be ſuffigance.

Leon. Drink ſome wine ere you go: fare you well.

Enter a Meſſenger,

Meſſ. My lord, they ſtay for you to give your daughter to her huſband.

Leon. I'll wait upon them. I am ready. [*Ex.* Leon.

Dogb. Go, good partner, go get you to *Francis Seacoal*, bid him bring his pen and inkhorn to the jail; we are now to examine thoſe men.

Verg. And we muſt do it wiſely.

Dogb. We will ſpare for no wit, I warrant; here's that ſhall drive ſome of them to a non-come. Only get the learned writer to ſet down our excommunication, and meet me at the jail. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV. SCENE I.

A CHURCH.

Enter Don Pedro, Don John, Leonato, Friar, Claudio, Benedick, Hero, *and* Beatrice.

LEONATO.

COME, friar *Francis*, be brief, only to the plain form of marriage, and you ſhall recount their particular duties afterwards.

Friar. You come hither, my lord, to marry this lady?

Claud. No.

Leon. To be marry'd to her, friar; you come to marry her.

Friar. Lady, you come hither to be marry'd to this Count.

Hero. I do.

Friar.

Friar. If either of you know any inward impediment why you ſhould not be conjoin'd, I charge you on your ſouls to utter it.

Claud. know you any, *Hero*?

Hero. None, my lord.

Friar. Know you any, Count?

Leon. I dare make his anſwer, none.

Claud. O what men dare do! what men may do! what men daily do!

Bene. How now! Interjections? why then ſome be of laughing, as ha, ha, he!

Claud. Stand thee by, friar: father, by your leave,
Will you with free and unconſtrained ſoul,
Give me this maid your daughter?

Leon. As freely, ſon, as God did give her me.

Claud. And what have I to give you back, whoſe worth
May counterpoiſe this rich and precious gift?

Pedro. Nothing, unleſs you render her again.

Claud. Sweet Prince, you learn me noble thankfulneſs:
There, *Leonato*, take her back again.
Give not this rotten orange to your friend.
She's but the ſign and ſemblance of her honour:
Behold how like a maid ſhe bluſhes here!
O, what authority and ſhew of truth
Can cunning ſin cover itſelf withal!
Comes not that blood, as modeſt evidence,
To witneſs ſimple virtue? would you not ſwear,
All you that ſee her, that ſhe were a maid,
By theſe exterior ſhews? but ſhe is none:
She knows the heat of a luxurious bed;
Her bluſh is guiltineſs, not modeſty.

Leon. What do you mean, my Lord?

Claud. Not to be marry'd,
Not knit my ſoul to an approved wanton.

Leon. Dear my Lord, if you in your own proof
Have vanquiſh'd the reſiſtance of her youth,
And made defeat of her virginity——

Claud. I know what you would ſay: if I have known her
You'll ſay, ſhe did embrace me as a husband,
And ſo extenuate the forehand ſin.

No, *Leonato*,
I never tempted her with word too large,
But as a brother to his ſiſter, ſhew'd
Baſhful ſincerity, and comely love.
Hero. And ſeem'd I ever otherwiſe to you?
Claud. Out on thy ſeeming, I will write againſt it;
You ſeem to me as *Dian* in her orb,
As chaſte as is the bud ere it be blown:
But you are more intemperate in your blood
Than *Venus*, or thoſe pamper'd animals
That rage in ſavage ſenſuality.
Hero. Is my Lord well, that he doth ſpeak ſo wide?
Leon. Sweet prince, why ſpeak not you?
Pedro. What ſhould I ſpeak?
I ſtand diſhonour'd, that have gone about
To link my dear friend to a common ſtale.
Leon. Are theſe things ſpoken, or do I but dream?
John. Sir, they are ſpoken, and theſe things are true.
Bene. This looks not like a nuptial.
Hero. True! O God!
Claud. *Leonato*, ſtand I here?
Is this the prince? Is this the prince's brother?
Is this face *Hero*'s? Are our eyes our own?
Leon. All this is ſo; but what of this, my Lord.
Claud. Let me but move one queſtion to your daughter,
And by that fatherly and kindly power
That you have in her, bid her anſwer truly.
Leon. I charge thee do ſo, as thou art my child.
Hero. O God defend me, how am I beſet!
What kind of catechizing call you this?
Leon. To make you anſwer truly to your name.
Hero. Is it not *Hero*? who can blot that name
With any juſt reproach?
Claud. Marry, that can *Hero*;
Hero herſelf can blot out *Hero*'s virtue.
What man was he talk'd with you yeſternight
Out at your window betwixt twelve and one?
Now if you are a maid anſwer to this.
Hero. I talk'd with no man at that hour, my Lord.
Pedro Why then you are no maiden. *Leonato*,
I am ſorry you muſt hear; upon mine honour,

Myſelf;

Myſelf, my brother, and this grieved Count
Did ſee her, hear her, at that hour laſt night
Talk with a ruffian at her chamber-window,
Who hath indeed, moſt like a liberal villain,
Confeſs'd the vile encounters they have had
A thouſand times in ſecret.

John. Fie, fie, they are not to be nam'd, my lord.
Not to be ſpoken of;
There is not chaſtity enough in language,
Without offence, to utter them: thus, pretty lady,
I am ſorry for thy much miſgovernment.

Claud. O *Hero*! what a *Hero* hadſt thou been,
If half thy outward graces had been plac'd
About the thoughts and counſels of thy heart?
But fare thee well, moſt foul, moſt fair! farewell,
Thou pure impiety, and impious purity!
For thee I'll lock up all the gates of love,
And on my eyelids ſhall conjecture hang,
To turn all beauty into thoughts of harm,
And never ſhall it more be gracious.

Leon. Hath no man's dagger here a point for me?

Beat. Why how now, couſin, wherefore ſink you down?

John. Come, let us go; theſe things come thus to light,
Smother her ſpirits up.

[*Exeunt D.* Pedro, *D.* John, *and* Claud.

Bene. How doth the lady?

Beat. Dead I think; help, uncle.
Hero! why *Hero!* uncle! Signior *Benedick!* friar!

Leon. O fate! take not away thy heavy hand,
Death is the faireſt cover for her ſhame
That may be wiſh'd for

Beat. How now, couſin *Hero?*

Friar. Have comfort, Lady.

Leon. Doſt thou look up?

Friar. Yea, wherefore ſhould ſhe not?

Leon. Wherefore? why doth not every earthly thing
Cry ſhame upon her? could ſhe here deny
The ſtory that is printed in her blood?
Do not live, *Hero*, do not ope thine eyes:
For did I think thou wouldſt not quickly die,
Thought I thy ſpirits were ſtronger than thy ſhames,

Myſelf

Myſelf would on the reward of reproaches
Strike at thy life. Greiv'd I, I had but one?
Chid I for that at frugal nature's frame?
I've one too much by thee. Why had I one?
Why ever waſt thou lovely in mine eyes?
Why had not I, with charitable hand,
Took up a beggar's iſſue at my gates?
Who ſmeered thus, and mir'd with infamy,
I might have ſaid, no part of it is mine;
This ſhame derives itſelf from unknown loins:
But mine, and mine I lov'd, and mine I prais'd,
And mine that I was proud on, mine ſo much,
That I myſelf was to myſelf not mine,
Valuing of her: why, ſhe, Oh! ſhe is fall'n
Into a pit of ink, that the wide ſea
Hath drops too few to waſh her clean again,
And ſalt too little which may ſeaſon give
To her foul tainted fleſh.

Bene. Sir, Sir, be patient;
For my part, I am ſo attir'd in wonder,
I know not what to ſay.

Beat. O, on my ſoul, my couſin is bely'd.

Bene. Lady, were you her bedfellow laſt night?

Beat No truly, not; altho' until laſt night
I have this twelvemonth been her bedfellow.

Leon. Confirm'd, confirm'd! O, that is ſtronger made,
Which was before barr'd up with ribs of iron.
Would the Prince lye? and *Claudio* would he lye,
Who lov'd her ſo, that ſpeaking of her foulneſs,
Waſh'd it with tears? Hence from her, let her die.

Friar. Hear me a little;
For I have only ſilent been ſo long,
And given way unto this courſe of fortune,
By noting of the lady. I have mark'd
A thouſand bluſhing apparitions
To ſtart into her face, a thouſand innocent ſhames,
In angel whiteneſs bear away thoſe bluſhes,
And in her eye there hath appear'd a fire
To burn the errors that theſe princes hold
Againſt her maiden truth. Call me a fool,
Truſt not my reading, nor my obſervation,
Which with experimental ſeal doth warrant

The tenour of my book; truſt not my age,
My reverence, calling, nor divinity,
If this ſweet lady lie not guiltleſs here,
Under ſome biting error.

Leon. Friar, it cannot be:
Thou ſeeſt that all the grace that ſhe hath left,
Is, that ſhe will not add to her damnation
A ſin of perjury; ſhe not denies it:
Why ſeek'ſt thou then to cover with excuſe,
That which appears in proper nakedneſs?

Friar. Lady, what man is he you are accus'd of?

Hero. They know that do accuſe me, I know none:
If I know more of any man alive
Than that which maiden modeſty doth warrant,
Let all my ſins lack mercy! O my father,
Prove you that any man with me convers'd
At Hours unmeet, or that I yeſternight
Maintain'd the change of words with any creature,
Refuſe me, hate me, torture me to death.

Friar. There is ſome ſtrange miſpriſion in the Princes.

Bene. Two of them have the very bent of honour,
And if their wiſdoms be miſled in this,
The practice of it lives in *John* the baſtard,
Whoſe ſpirits toil in frame of villanies.

Leon. I know not: if they ſpeak but truth of her,
Theſe hands ſhall tear her; if they wrong her honour,
The proudeſt of them ſhall well hear of it.
Time hath not yet ſo dry'd this blood of mine,
Nor age ſo eat up my invention,
Nor fortune made ſuch havock of my means,
Nor my bad life reft me ſo much of friends,
But they ſhall find awak'd in ſuch a kind,
Both ſtrength of limb, and policy of mind,
Ability in means and choice of friends,
To quit me of them throughly.

Friar. Pauſe a while,
And let my counſel ſway you in this caſe.
Your Daughter here the Princes left for dead;
Let her a while be ſecretly kept in,
And publiſh it that ſhe is dead indeed:
Maintain a mourning oſtentation,
And on your family's old monument

Hang mournful epitaphs, and do all rites
That appertain unto a burial.

Leon. What shall become of this? what will this do?

Friar. Marry, this well carry'd shall on her behalf
Change slander to remorse; that is some good:
But not for that dream I on this strange course,
But on this travel look for greater birth:
She dying, as it must be so maintain'd,
Upon the instant that she was accus'd,
Shall be lamented, pity'd, and excus'd,
Of ev'ry hearer: for it so falls out,
That what we have we prize not to the worth,
While we enjoy it; but being lack'd and lost,
Why then we rack the value, then we find
The virtue that possession would not shew us
Whilst it was ours; so will it fare with *Claudio*:
When he shall hear she dy'd upon his words,
Th' idea of her love shall sweetly creep
Into his study of imagination,
And every lovely organ of her life
Shall come apparel'd in more precious habit;
More moving, delicate, and full of life,
Into the eye and prospect of his soul,
Than when she liv'd indeed. Then shall he mourn,
If ever love had interest in his liver,
And wish he had not so accused her;
No, though he thought his accusation true:
Let this be so, and doubt not but success
Will fashion the event in better shape,
Than I can lay it down in likelihood.
But if all aim but this be levell'd false,
The supposition of the lady's death
Will quench the wonder of her infamy.
And if it sort not well, you may conceal her,
As best befits her wounded reputation,
In some reclusive and religious life,
Out of all eyes, tongues, minds, and injuries.

Bene. Signior *Leonato*, let the friar advise you:
And though you know my inwardness and love
Is very much unto the Prince and *Claudio*,
Yet, by mine honour, I will deal in this

As ſecretly and juſtly, as your ſoul
Should with your body.

Leon. Being that I flow in grief,
The ſmalleſt twine may lead me.

Friar. 'Tis well conſented, preſently away.
For to ſtrange ſores, ſtrangely they ſtrain the cure.
Come, Lady, die to live; this wedding-day
Perhaps is but prolong'd: have patience and endure.

[*Exeunt.*

Manent Benedick *and* Beatrice.

Bene. Lady *Beatrice*, have you wept all this while?

Beat. Yea, and I will weep a while longer.

Bene. I will not deſire that.

Beat. You have no reaſon, I do it freely.

Bene. Surely I do believe your fair couſin is wrong'd.

Beat. Ah, how much might the man deſerve of me that would right her!

Bene. Is there any way to ſhew ſuch friendſhip?

Beat. A very even way, but no ſuch friend.

Bene. May a man do it?

Beat. It is a man's office, but not yours.

Bene. I do love nothing in the world ſo well as you; is not that ſtrange?

Beat. As ſtrange as the thing I know not; it were as poſſible for me to ſay, I loved nothing ſo well as you; but believe me not; and yet I lie not; I confeſs nothing, nor I deny nothing. I am ſorry for my couſin.

Bene. By my ſword, *Beatrice*, thou loveſt me.

Beat. Do not ſwear by it, and eat it.

Bene I will ſwear by it that you love me; and I will make him eat it that ſays I love you not.

Beat. Will you not eat your word?

Bene. With no ſauce that can be devis'd to it; I proteſt I love thee.

Beat. Why then god forgive me.

Bene. What offence, ſweet *Beatrice?*

Beat. You have ſtay'd me in a happy hour; I was about to proteſt I lov'd you.

Bene. And do it with all thy heart.

Beat.

Beat. I love you with ſo much of my heart, that none is left to proteſt.

Bene. Come, bid me do any thing for thee.

Beat. Kill *Claudio.*

Bene. Ha! not for the wide world.

Beat. You kill me to deny; farewel.

Bene. Tarry, ſweet *Beatrice.*

Beat. I am gone, tho' I am here; there is no love in you; nay, I pray you, let me go.

Bene. Beatrice!

Beat. In faith, I will go.

Bene. We'll be friends firſt.

Beat. You dare eaſier be friends with me, than fight with mine enemy.

Bene. Is *Claudio* thine enemy?

Beat. Is he not approved in the height a villain? that hath ſlander'd, ſcorn'd, diſhonour'd my kinſwoman! O that I were a man! what bear her in hand, until they come to take hands, and then with public accuſation, uncover'd ſlander, unmitigated rancour.——O God that I were a man. I would eat his heart in the market place.

Bene. Hear me, *Beatrice.*

Beat. Talk with a man out at a window?——a proper ſaying!

Bene. Nay, but *Beatrice.*

Beat. Sweet *Hero!* ſhe is wrong'd, ſhe is ſlander'd, ſhe is undone.

Bene. But——

Beat. Princes and counts! ſurely a princely teſtimony, a goodly count comfect, a ſweet gallant ſurely! O that I were a man for his ſake! Or that I had any friend would be a man for my ſake! but manhood is melted into courteſies, valour into compliment, and men are only turn'd into tongue, and trim ones too; he is now as valiant as *Hercules*, that only tells a lye, and ſwears it; I cannot be a man with wiſhing, therefore I will die a woman with grieving.

Bene. Tarry, good *Beatrice*; by this hand, I love thee.

Beat. Uſe it for my love ſome other way than ſwearing by it.

Bene Think you in your ſoul the Count *Claudio* hath wrong'd *Hero?*

Hero. Yea, as ſure as I have a thought or a ſoul.

Bene. Enough, I am engag'd, I will challenge him. I will kiſs your hand, and ſo leave you; by this hand, *Claudio* ſhall render me dear account; as you hear of me, ſo think of me; go, comfort your couſin; I muſt ſay ſhe's dead, and ſo farewel. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Dogberry, Verges, Borachio, Conrade, *the Town-Clerk and Sexton in Gowns.*

To. Cl. Is our whole diſſembly appear'd?

Dogb. O, a ſtool and cuſhion for the ſexton!

Sexton. Which be the malefactors?

Verg. Marry, that am I and my partner.

Dogb. Nay, that's certain, we have the exhibition to examine.

Sexton. But which are the offenders that are to be examin'd? let them come before maſter conſtable.

To. Cl. Yea, marry, let them come before me; what is your name, friend?

Bora. Borachio.

To. Cl. Pray write down, *Borachio.* Your's, Sirrah?

Conr. I am a gentleman, Sir, and my name is *Conrade.*

To. Cl. Write down, maſter gentleman *Conrade*; maſters, do you ſerve God?

Both. Yea, Sir, we hope.

To. Cl. Write down, that they hope they ſerve God: and write God firſt: for God defend, but God ſhould go before ſuch villains.——Maſters, it is proved already that you are little better than falſe knaves, and it will go near to be thought ſo ſhortly; how anſwer you for yourſelves?

Conr. Marry, Sir, we ſay we are none.

To. Cl A marvellous witty fellow I aſſure you, but I will go about with him. Come you hither, ſirrah; a word in your ear, Sir; I ſay to you, it is thought you are falſe knaves.

Bora. Sir, I ſay to you, we are none.

To. Cl Well, ſtand aſide; 'fore God they are both in a tale: have you writ down, that they are none?

Sexton. Maſter Town-clerk, you go not the way to examine, you muſt call the watch that are their accuſers.

To. Cl.

To. Cl. Yea, marry, that's the eaſieſt way, let the watch come forth; maſters, I charge you in the Prince's name accuſe theſe men.

Enter Watchmen.

1 *Watch.* This man ſaid, Sir, that Don *John* the Prince's brother was a villain.

To Cl. Write down, Prince *John* a villain; why this is flat perjury, to call a Prince's brother villain.

Bora. Maſter Town-clerk.

To. Cl. Pray thee, fellow, peace; I do not like thy look, I promiſe thee.

Sexton. What heard you him ſay elſe?

2 *Watch.* Marry, that he had received a thouſand ducats of Don *John*, for accuſing the Lady *Hero* wrongfully.

To Cl. Flat burglary as ever was committed.

Dogb. Yes, by th' Maſs, that it is.

Sexton. What elſe, fellow?

1 *Watch.* And that Count *Claudio* did mean, upon his words, to diſgrace *Hero* before the whole aſſembly, and not marry her.

To. Cl. O villain! thou wilt be condemn'd into everlaſting redemption for this.

Sexton. What elſe?

2 *Watch.* This is all.

Sexton. And this is more, maſters, than you can deny. Prince *John* is this morning ſecretly ſtoll'n away: *Hero* was in this manner accus'd, and in this very manner refus'd, and upon the grief of this ſuddenly dy'd. Maſter conſtable, let theſe men be bound and brought to *Leonato*; I will go before, and ſhew him their examination. [*Exit.*

Dogb. Come, let them be opinion'd.

Verg. Let them be in the hands of *Coxcomb.*

Dogb. God's my Life, where's the ſexton? let him write down the prince's officer *Coxcomb:* come, bind them, thou naughty varlet!

Cour. Away, you are an aſs, you are an aſs.

Dogb. Doſt thou not ſuſpect my place? doſt thou not ſuſpect my years? O that he were here to write me down an aſs! but maſters, remember that I am an aſs, though

it be not written down, yet forget not that I am an aſs; no, thou villain, thou art full of piety, as ſhall be prov'd upon thee by good witneſs; I am a wiſe fellow, and which is more, an officer; and which is more, an houſholder; and which is more, as pretty a piece of fleſh as any in *Meſſina*, and one that knows the law, go to; and a rich fellow enough, go to; and a fellow that hath had loſſes, and one that hath two gowns, and every thing handſome about him; bring him away; O that I had been writ down an aſs! [*Exeunt.*

ACT V. SCENE I.

Before Leonato's *Houſe.*

Enter LEONATO *and* ANTONIO.

ANTONIO.

If you go on thus, you will kill yourſelf,
And 'tis not wiſdom thus to ſecond grief
Againſt yourſelf.

Leon. I pray thee, ceaſe thy counſel,
Which falls into mine ears as profitleſs
As water in a ſieve; give not me counſel,
Nor let no comfort elſe delight mine ear,
But ſuch a one whoſe wrongs doth ſuit with mine.
Bring me a father that ſo lov'd his child,
Whoſe joy of her is overwhelm'd like mine,
And bid him ſpeak to me of patience;
Meaſure his woe the length and breadth of mine,
And let it anſwer every ſtrain for ſtrain:
As thus for thus, and ſuch a grief for ſuch,
In every lineament, branch, ſhape and form;
If ſuch a one will ſmile and ſtroke his beard,
Bid ſorrow wag; cry, hem! when he ſhould groan,
Patch grief with proverbs, make misfortune drunk

With

With candle-wasters; bring him yet to me,
And I of him will gather patience.
But there is no such man; for, brother, men
Can counsel, and give comfort to that grief
Which they themselves not feel; but tasting it,
Their counsel turns to passion, which before
Would give preceptial medicine to rage,
Fetter strong madness in a silken thread,
Charm ach with air, and agony with words.
No, no, 'tis all mens office, to speak patience
To those that wring under the load of sorrow;
But no man's virtue nor sufficiency
To be so moral, when he shall endure
The like himself; therefore give me no counsel:
My Griefs cry louder than advertisement.

Ant. Therein do men from children nothing differ.

Leon. I pray thee, peace; I will be flesh and blood;
For there was never yet philosopher,
That could endure the tooth-ach patiently;
However they have writ the style of Gods,
And made a pish at chance and sufferance.

Ant. Yet bend not all the harm upon yourself,
Make those, that do offend you, suffer too.

Leon. There thou speak'st reason; nay, I will do so.
My soul doth tell me *Hero* is bely'd,
And that shall *Claudio* know, so shall the Prince,
And all of them that thus dishonour her.

Enter Don Pedro *and* Claudio.

Ant. Here come the prince and *Claudio* hastily.

Pedro. Good den, good den.

Claud. Good day to both of you.

Leon. Hear you, my Lords?

Pedro. We have some haste, *Leonato.*

Leon. Some haste, my lord! well, fare you well, my lord.
Are you so hasty now? Well, all is one.

Pedro. Nay, do not quarrel with us, good old man.

Ant. If he could right himself with quarrelling,
Some of us would lie low.

Claud. Who wrongs him?

Leon. Marry, thou doſt wrong me, thou diſſembler, thou!
Nay, never lay thy hand upon thy ſword,
I fear thee not.

Claud. Marry, beſhrew my hand,
If it ſhould give your age ſuch cauſe of fear;
In faith my Hand meant nothing to my ſword.

Leon. Tuſh, tuſh, man, never fleer and jeſt at me;
I ſpeak not like a dotard nor a fool,
As under privilege of age to brag.
What I have done being young, or what would do,
Were I not old: know, *Claudio*, to thy head,
Thou haſt ſo wrong'd my innocent child and me,
That I am forc'd to lay my reverence by,
And with grey hairs and bruiſe of many days
Do challenge thee to tryal of a man;
I ſay, thou haſt bely'd my innocent child,
Thy ſlander hath gone through and through her heart,
And ſhe lies bury'd with her anceſtors;
O, in a tomb where never ſcandal ſlept,
Save this of hers, fram'd by thy villany!

Claud. My villany?

Leon. Thine, *Claudio*; thine, I ſay.

Pedro. You ſay not right, old man.

Leon. My lord, my lord,
I'll prove it on his body, if he dare;
Deſpight his nice fence, and his active practice,
His *May* of youth, and bloom of luſtihood.

Claud. Away, I will not have to do with you.

Leon. Canſt thou ſo daffe me? thou haſt kill'd my child;
If thou kill'ſt me, boy, thou ſhalt kill a man.

Ant. He ſhall kill two of us, and men indeed;
But that's no matter, let him kill one firſt;
Win me and wear me, let him anſwer me;
Come, follow me, boy, come boy, follow me,
Sir boy, I'll whip you from your foining fence;
Nay, as I am a gentleman, I will.

Leon. Brother, ———

Ant.

Ant. Content yourſelf; God knows I lov'd my niece,
And ſhe is dead, ſlander'd to death by villains,
That dare as well anſwer a man, indeed,
As I dare take a ſerpent by the tongue!
Boys, apes, braggarts, jacks, milkſops!

Leon. Brother *Anthony!*

Ant. Hold your content: what, man? I know them, yea,
And what they weigh, even to the utmoſt ſcruple:
Scrambling, out-facing, faſhion-mongering boys,
That lye, and cog, and flout, deprave and ſlander,
Go antickly, and ſhow an outward hideouſneſs,
And ſpeak off half a dozen dangerous words,
How they might hurt their enemies, if they durſt;
And this is all.

Leon But, brother *Anthony?*

Ant. Come, 'tis no matter,
Do not you meddle, let me deal in this.

Pedro. Gentlemen both, we will not wake your patience.
My heart is ſorry for your daughter's death;
But, on my honour, ſhe was charg'd with nothing
But what was true, and very full of proof.

Leon. My lord, my lord——

Pedro. I will not hear you.

Leon. No! come, brother, away; I will be heard.

Ant. And ſhall, or ſome of us will ſmart for it

[*Exeunt both.*

Enter Benedick.

Pedro. See, ſee, here comes the man we went to ſeek.

Claud. Now, Signior, what news?

Bene. Good day, my Lord.

Pedro. Welcome, Signior; you are almoſt come to part almoſt a fray.

Claud. We had like to have had our two noſes ſnapt off by two old men without teeth.

Pedro. *Leonato* and his brother; what think'ſt thou? Had we fought, I doubt we ſhould have been too young for them.

Bene

Bene. In a falſe quarrel there is no true valour: I came to ſeek you both.

Claud. We have been up and down to ſeek thee, for we are high-proof melancholy, and would fain have it beaten away: wilt thou uſe thy wit?

Bene. It is in my ſcabbard; ſhall I draw it?

Pedro. Doſt thou wear thy wit by thy ſide?

Claud. Never any did ſo, though very many have been beſide their wit. I will bid thee draw, as we do the minſtrels; draw to pleaſure us.

Pedro. As I am an honeſt man, he looks pale: art thou ſick or angry?

Claud. What! courage, man: what tho' care kill'd a cat, thou haſt mettle enough in thee to kill care.

Bene. Sir, I ſhall meet your wit in the career, if you charge it againſt me. I pray you, chuſe another ſubject.

Claud. Nay, then give him another ſtaff, this laſt was broke croſs.

Pedro. By this light, he changes more and more: I think he be angry indeed.

Claud. If he be, he knows how to turn his girdle.

Bene. Shall I ſpeak a word in your ear?

Claud. God bleſs me from a challenge!

Bene. You are a villain; I jeſt not. I will make it good how you dare, with what you dare, and when you dare. Do me right, or I will proteſt your cowardiſe. You have kill'd a ſweet lady, and her death ſhall fall heavy on you. Let me hear from you.

Claud. Well, I will meet you, ſo I may have good cheer.

Pedro. What, a feaſt?

Claud. I'faith, I thank him, he hath bid me to a calves-head and a cap-on, the which if I do not carve moſt curiouſly, ſay my knife's naught. Shall I not find a woodcock too?

Bene. Sir, your wit ambles well, it goes eaſily.

Pedro. I'll tell thee how *Beatrice* prais'd thy wit the other day: I ſaid, thou hadſt a fine wit; right, ſays ſhe, a fine little one; no, ſaid I, a great wit; juſt, ſaid ſhe, a great groſs one; nay, ſaid I, a good wit; juſt, ſaid ſhe, it hurts no body; nay, ſaid I, the gentleman is wiſe; certain, ſaid ſhe, a wiſe gentleman; nay,

nay, said I, he hath the tongues; that, I believe, said she, for he swore a thing to me on *Monday* night, which he forswore on *Tuesday* morning; there's a double tongue, there's two tongues. Thus did she an hour together transshape thy particular virtues; yet, at last, she concluded with a sigh, thou wast the properest man in *Italy*.

Claud. For the which, she wept heartily, and said, she car'd not.

Pedro. Yea, that she did; but yet, for all that, and, if she did not hate him deadly, she would love him dearly; the old man's daughter told us all.

Claud. All, all: and moreover, God saw him, when he was hid in the garden!

Pedro. But when shall we set the savage bull's horns on the sensible *Benedick*'s head?

Claud. Yea, and text underneath, here dwells *Benedick* the married man.

Bene. Fare you well, boy, you know my mind; I will leave you now to your gossip-like humour; you break jests, as braggarts do their blades, which, God be thank'd, hurt not. My lord, for your many courtesies I thank you; I must discontinue your company; your brother the bastard is fled from *Messina*; you have among you kill'd a sweet and innocent lady. For my lord lack-beard there, he and I shall meet, and 'till then, peace be with him! [*Exit* Benedick.

Pedro. He is in earnest.

Claud. In most profound earnest; and I'll warrant you, for the love of *Beatrice*.

Pedro. And hath challeng'd thee?

Claud. Most sincerely.

Pedro. What a pretty thing man is, when he goes in his doublet and hose, and leaves off his wit!

Enter Dogberry, Verges, Conrade, *and* Borachio *guarded.*

Claud. He is then a giant to an ape, but then is an ape a doctor to such a man.

Pedro. But soft you, let me see, pluck up my heart, and be sad, did he not say, my brother was fled?

Dogb.

Dogb. Come you, Sir, if juſtice cannot tame you, ſhe ſhall ne'er weigh more reaſons in her balance; nay, if you be a curſing hypocrite once, you muſt be look'd to.

Pedro. How now, two of my brother's men bound? *Borachio* one!

Claud. Hearken after their offence, my lord.

Pedro. Officers, what offence have theſe men done?

Dogb. Marry, Sir, they have committed falſe report, moreover they have ſpoken untruths; ſecondarily, they are ſlanders; ſixthly and laſtly, they have bely'd a lady; thirdly, they have verify'd unjuſt things; and to conclude, they are lying knaves.

Pedro. Firſt, I aſk thee what they have done; thirdly, I aſk thee what's their offence; ſixthly and laſtly, why they are committed; and to conclude, what you lay to their charge?

Claud. Rightly reaſon'd, and in his own diviſion; and, by my troth, there's one meaning well ſuited.

Pedro. Whom have you offended, maſters, that you are thus bound to your anſwer? This learned conſtable is too cunning to be underſtood. What's your offence?

Bora. Sweet Prince, let me go no further to mine anſwer; do you hear me, and let this Count kill me: I have deceived, even your very eyes; what your wiſdoms could not diſcover, theſe ſhallow fools have brought to light, who, in the night, overheard me confeſſing to this man, how Don *John* your brother incens'd me to ſlander the lady *Hero*; how you were brought into the orchard, and ſaw me court *Margaret* in *Hero*'s garment; how you diſgrac'd her when you ſhould marry her; my villany they have upon record, which I had rather ſeal with my death, than repeat over to my ſhame; the Lady is dead upon mine and my maſter's falſe accuſation; and briefly, I deſire nothing but the reward of a villain.

Pedro. Runs not this ſpeech like iron through your blood?

Claud. I have drank poiſon, while he utter'd it.

Pedro. But did my brother ſet thee on to this?

Bora. Yea, paid me richly, for the practice of it.

Pedro.

Pedro. He is compos'd and fram'd of treachery.
And fled he is upon this villany.

Claud. Sweet *Hero!* now thy image doth appear,
In the rare ſemblance that I lov'd it firſt.

Dogb. Come, bring away the plaintiffs. By this time our ſexton hath reform'd Signior *Leonato* of the matter; and maſters, do not forget to ſpecify, when time and place ſhall ſerve, that I am an aſs.

Verg. Here, here comes maſter Signior *Leonato*, and the ſexton too.

Enter Leonato.

Leon. Which is the villain? Let me ſee his eyes,
That when I note another man like him,
I may avoid him; which of theſe is he?

Bora. If you would know your wronger, look on me.

Leon. Art thou, art thou the ſlave that with thy breath
Has kill'd mine innocent child?

Bora. Yea, even I alone.

Leon. No, not ſo, villain, thou bely'ſt thyſelf;
Here ſtand a pair of honourable men,
A third is fled, that had a hand in it:
I thank you, princes, for my daughter's death;
Record it with your high and worthy deeds.
'Twas bravely done, if you bethink you of it.

Claud. I know not how to pray your patience,
Yet I may ſpeak; chuſe your revenge yourſelf,
Impoſe me to what penance your invention
Can lay upon my ſin; yet, ſinn'd I not,
But in miſtaking.

Pedro. By my ſoul, nor I;
And yet to ſatisfy this good old man,
I would bend under any heavy weight,
That he'll enjoin me to.

Leon. You cannot bid my daughter live again,
That were impoſſible; but I pray you both
Poſſeſs the people in *Meſſina* here
How innocent ſhe dy'd; and if your love
Can labour ought in ſad invention,
Hang her an epitaph upon her tomb,
And ſing it to her bones, ſing it to-night:

To

To-morrow morning come you to my houſe,
And ſince you could not be my ſon-in-law,
Be yet my nephew; my brother hath a daughter,
Almoſt a copy of my child that's dead,
And ſhe alone is heir to both of us.
Give her the right you ſhould have given her couſin,
And ſo dies my revenge.

Claud. O, noble Sir!
Your over-kindneſs doth wring tears from me:
I do embrace your offer, and diſpoſe
For henceforth of poor *Claudio.*

Leon. To morrow then I will expect your coming,
To night I take my leave. This naughty man
Shall face to face be brought to *Margaret,*
Who, I believe, was pack'd in all this wrong,
Hir'd to it by your brother.

Bora. No, by my Soul, ſhe was not;
Nor knew not what ſhe did, when ſhe ſpoke to me,
But always hath been juſt and virtuous,
In any thing that I do know by her.

Dogb. Moreover, Sir, which indeed is not under white and black, this plaintiff here, the offender, did call me aſs; I beſeech you, let it be remembered in his puniſhment; and alſo the watch heard them talk of one *Deformed:* they ſay he wears a key in his ear, and a lock hanging by it, and borrows money in God's name, the which he hath us'd ſo long, and never paid, that now men grow hard-hearted, and will lend nothing for God's ſake. Pray you examine him upon that point.

Leon. I thank thee for thy care and honeſt pains.

Dogb. Your worſhip ſpeaks like a moſt thankful and reverend youth; and I praiſe God for you.

Leon. There's for thy pains.

Dogb. God ſave the foundation!

Leon. Go, I diſcharge thee of thy priſoner; and I thank thee.

Dogb. I leave an errant knave with your worſhip, which I beſeech your worſhip to correct yourſelf, for the example of others. God keep your worſhip; I wiſh your worſhip well: God reſtore you to health; I humbly give

give you leave to depart; and if a merry meeting may be wiſh'd, God prohibit it. Come, neighbour.

[*Exeunt.*

Leon. Until to-morrow morning, Lords, farewel.

Ant. Farewel, my lords, we look for you to-morrow.

Pedro. We will not fail.

Claud. To night I'll mourn with *Hero.*

Leon. Bring you theſe fellows on, we'll talk with *Margaret,*
How her acquaintance grew with this lewd fellow.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE, Leonato's *Houſe.*

Enter Benedick *and* Margaret.

Bene. Pray thee, ſweet miſtreſs *Margaret,* deſerve well at my hands, by helping me to the ſpeech of *Beatrice.*

Marg. Will you then write me a ſonnet in praiſe of my beauty?

Bene. In ſo high a ſtyle, *Margaret,* that no man living ſhall come over it; for in moſt comely truth thou deſerveſt it.

Marg. To have no man come over me? why, ſhall I always keep above ſtairs?

Bene. Thy wit is as quick as the greyhound's mouth, it catches.

Marg. And yours as blunt as the fencer's foils, which hit, but hurt not.

Bene. A moſt manly wit, *Margaret,* it will not hurt a woman; and ſo I pray thee, call *Beatrice:* I give thee the bucklers.

Marg. Give us the ſwords, we have bucklers of our own.

Bene. If you uſe them, *Margaret,* you muſt put in the pikes with a vice, and they are dangerous weapons for maids.

Marg. Well, I will call *Beatrice* to you, who, I think, hath legs. [*Exit* Margaret.

Bene. And therefore will come. [*Sings.*] *The God of love that ſits above, and knows me, and knows me, how pitiful I deſerve.* I mean in ſinging; but in loving,

Leander

Leander the good ſwimmer, *Troilus* the firſt employer of pandars, and a whole book full of theſe *quondam* carpet-mongers, whoſe names yet run ſmoothly in the even road of a blank verſe, why, they never were ſo truly turn'd over and over, as my poor ſelf in love; marry, I cannot ſhew it in rhime; I have try'd, I can find out no rhime to *lady* but *baby*, an innocent rhime; for *ſcorn*, *horn*, a hard rhime; for *ſchool*, *fool*, a babling rhime; very ominous endings; no, I was not born under a rhiming planet, for I cannot woo in feſtival terms.

Enter Beatrice.

Sweet *Beatrice*, wouldſt thou come, when I call thee?

Beat. Yea, Signior, and depart, when you bid me.

Bene. O, ſtay but till then.

Beat. Then is ſpoken; fare you well now; and yet ere I go, let me go with that I came for, which is, with knowing what hath paſt between you and *Claudio*.

Bene. Only foul words, and thereupon I will kiſs thee.

Beat. Foul words are but foul wind, and foul wind is but foul breath, and foul breath is noiſome; therefore I will depart unkiſs'd.

Bene. Thou haſt frighted the word out of its right ſenſe, ſo forcible is thy wit; but I muſt tell thee plainly, *Claudio* undergoes my challenge, and either I muſt ſhortly hear from him, or I will ſubſcribe him a coward: and I pray thee now tell me for which of my bad parts didſt thou firſt fall in love with me?

Beat. For them all together, which maintain'd ſo politic a ſtate of evil, that they will not admit any good part to intermingle with them: but for which of my good parts did you firſt ſuffer love for me?

Bene. Suffer love! a good epithet; I do ſuffer love indeed, for I love thee againſt my will.

Beat. In ſpight of your heart, I think; alas! poor heart! if you ſpight it for my ſake, I will ſpight it for yours; for I will never love that which my friend hates.

Bene. Thou and I are too wiſe to woo peaceably.

Beat.

Beat. It appears not in this confeſſion; there's not one wiſe man among twenty that will praiſe himſelf.

Bene. An old, an old inſtance, *Beatrice*, that liv'd in the time of good neighbours; if a man do not erect in this age his own tomb ere he dies, he ſhall live no longer in monuments, than the bells ring and the widow weeps.

Beat. And how long is that, think you?

Bene. Queſtion? why an hour in clamour, and a quarter in rheum; therefore, it is moſt expedient for the wiſe, if Don worm (his conſcience) find no impediment to the contrary, to be the trumpet of his own virtues, as I am to myſelf; ſo much for praiſing myſelf; who, I myſelf will bear witneſs, is praiſe worthy; and now tell me how doth your couſin?

Beat. Very ill.

Bene. And how do you?

Beat. Very ill too.

Enter Urſula.

Bene. Serve God, love me, and mend; there will leave you too, for here comes one in haſte.

Urſu. Madam, you muſt come to your uncle; yonder's old coil at home; it is proved my lady *Hero* hath been falſly accus'd, the Prince and *Claudio* mightily abus'd, and Don *John* is the author of all, who is fled and gone: will you come preſently?

Beat. Will you go hear this news, Signior?

Bene. I will live in thy heart, die in thy lap, and be bury'd in thine eyes; and moreover I will go with thee to thy uncle. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE a CHURCH.

Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, *and Attendants with tapers.*

Claud. Is this the monument of *Leonato?*

Attend. It is, my lord.

EPITAPH.

Done to death by ſland'rous tongues,
Was the Hero *that here lies:*
Death, in guerdon of her wrongs,
Gives her fame which never dies.
So the life that dy'd with ſhame,
Lives in death with glorious fame.
Hang thou there upon the tomb,
Praiſing her, when I am dumb.

Claud. Now muſick ſound, and ſing your ſolemn hymn.

The SONG.

Pardon, Goddeſs of the night,
Thoſe that ſlew thy virgin knight;
For the which with ſongs of woe,
Round about her tomb they go.
Midnight, aſſiſt our moan,
Help us to ſigh and groan
Heavily, heavily.
Graves yawn and yield your dead,
'Till death be uttered
Heavily, heavily.

Claud. Now unto thy bones good night;
Yearly will I do this rite.
Pedro. Good-morrow, maſters, put your torches out.
The wolves have prey'd; and look, the gentle day
Before the wheels of *Phœbus*, round about
Dapples the drowſy eaſt with ſpots of grey.
Thanks to you all, and leave us; fare you well.
Claud. Good-morrow, maſters; each his ſeveral way.
Pedro. Come, let us hence, and put on other weeds,
And then to *Leonato*'s we will go.
Claud. And *Hymen* now with luckier iſſue ſpeeds
Than this, for whom we render'd up this woe.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE,

SCENE, Leonato's *House*.

Enter Leonato, Benedick, Margaret, Urſula, Antonio, Friar, *and* Hero.

Friar. Did not I tell you ſhe was innocent?
Leon. So are the Prince and *Claudio* who accus'd her,
Upon the error that you heard debated.
But *Margaret* was in ſome fault for this;
Although againſt her will, as it appears,
In the true courſe of all the queſtion.
Ant. Well, I am glad that all things ſort ſo well.
Bene. And ſo am I, being elſe by faith enforc'd
To call young *Claudio* to a reckoning for it.
Leon. Well, daughter, and you gentlewomen all,
Withdraw into a chamber by yourſelves,
And when I ſend for you come hither mask'd:
The Prince and *Claudio* promis'd by this hour
To viſit me; you know your office, brother,
You muſt be father to your brother's daughter,
And give her to young *Claudio.* [*Exeunt Ladies.*
Ant. Which I will do with confirm'd countenance.
Bene. Friar, I muſt intreat your pains, I think.
Friar. To do what, Signior?
Bene. To bind me or undo me, one of them:
Signior *Leonato,* truth it is, good Signior,
Your niece regards me, with an eye of favour.
Leon. That eye my daughter lent her, 'tis moſt true.
Bene. And I do with an eye of Love requite her.
Leon. The ſight whereof, I think, you had from me,
From *Claudio* and the Prince; but what's your will?
Bene. Your anſwer, Sir, is enigmatical;
But for my will, my will is, your good will
May ſtand with ours, this day to be conjoin'd
I'th' ſtate of honourable marriage,
In which, good Friar, I ſhall deſire your help.
Leon. My heart is with your liking.
Friar. And my help.

Enter

Enter Don Pedro *and* Claudio, *with Attendants.*

Pedro. Good-morrow to this fair assembly.
Leon. Good-morrow, Prince, good morrow, *Claudio.*
We here attend you; are you yet determin'd
To-day, to marry with my brother's daughter?
Claud. I'll hold my mind, were she an *Ethiope.*
Leon. Call her forth, brother, here's the Friar ready.
Pedro. Good-morrow, *Benedick*; why, what's the matter,
That you have such a *February* face,
So full of frost, of storm and cloudiness?
Claud. I think he thinks upon the savage bull:
Tush, fear not, man, we'll tip thy horns with gold,
And so all *Europe* shall rejoice at thee,
As once *Europa* did at lusty *Jove*,
When he would play the noble beast in love.
Bene. Bull *Jove*, Sir, had an amiable low,
And some such strange bull leap'd your father's cow,
And got a calf in that same noble feat,
Much like to you, for you have just his bleat.

Enter Hero, Beatrice, Margaret, *and* Ursula.

Claud. For this I owe you; here come other reckonings.
Which is the lady I must seize upon?
Leon. This same is she, and I do give you her.
Claud. Why then she's mine; sweet, let me see your face.
Leon. No, that you shall not, 'till you take her hand
Before this Friar, and swear to marry her.
Claud. Give me your hand; before this holy Friar,
I am your husband, if you like of me.
Hero. And when I liv'd, I was your other wife,
[*Unmasking.*
And when you lov'd, you were my other husband.
Claud. Another *Hero?*
Hero. Nothing certainer.
One *Hero* dy'd defil'd, but I do live;
And surely, as I live, I am a maid.
Pedro. The former *Hero! Hero*, that is dead!

Leon.

Leon. She dy'd, my lord, but whiles her ſlander liv'd.

Friar. All this amazement can I qualify.
When after that the holy rites are ended,
I'll thee largely of fair *Hero*'s death:
Mean time let wonder ſeem familiar,
And to the chapel let us preſently.

Bene. Soft and fair, friar. Which is *Beatrice?*

Beat. I anſwer to that name; what is your will?

Bene. Do not you love me?

Beat. Why, no; no more than reaſon.

Bene. Why then your uncle, and the prince, and *Claudio*, have been deceived; they ſwore you did.

Beat. Do not you love me?

Bene. Troth, no; no more than reaſon.

Beat. Why, then my couſin, *Margaret*, and *Urſula* Are much deceiv'd; for they did ſwear you did.

Bene. They ſwore you were almoſt ſick for me.

Beat. They ſwore you were well-nigh dead for me.

Bene. 'Tis no matter, then you do not love me?

Beat. No, truly, but in friendly recompence.

Leon. Come, couſin, I am ſure you love the gentleman.

Claud. And I'll be ſworn upon it that he loves her;
For here's a paper written in his hand,
A halting ſonnet of his own pure brain,
Faſhion'd to *Beatrice.*

Hero. And here's another,
Writ in my couſin's hand, ſtolen from her pocket.
Containing her affection unto *Benedick.*

Bene. A miracle! here's our own hands againſt our hearts; come, I will have thee; but, by this light, I take thee for pity.

Beat. I would now deny you, but, by this good day, I yield upon great perſuaſion, and partly to ſave your life; for as I was told, you were in a conſumption.

Bene. Peace, I will ſtop your mouth.

Pedro. How doſt thou, *Benedick*, the married man?

Bene. I'll tell thee what, Prince; a college of wit-crackers cannot flout me out of my humour: doſt thou think I care for a ſatire, or an epigram? no: if a man will be beaten with brains, he ſhall wear nothing handſome about him. In brief, ſince I do purpoſe to marry, I will think nothing to any purpoſe that the world can ſay againſt it; and therefore never

never flout at me, for what I have said against it; for man is a giddy thing, and this is my conclusion; for thy part, *Claudio*, I did think to have beaten thee, but in that thou art like to be my kinsman, live unbruis'd, and love my cousin.

Claud. I had well hoped thou wouldst have denied *Beatrice*, that I might have cudgell'd thee out of thy single life, to make thee a double dealer, which out of question thou wilt be, if my cousin do not look exceeding narrowly to thee

Bene. Come, come, we are friends; let's have a dance, e'er we are marry'd, that we may lighten our own hearts, and our wives heels.

Leon. We'll have dancing afterwards.

Bene. First, o' my word; therefore play music. Prince, thou art sad, get thee a wife, get thee a wife; there is no staff more reverend than one tipt with horn.

Enter Messenger.

Mess. My lord, your brother *John* is ta'en in flight,
And brought with armed men back to *Messina*.

Bene. Think not on him till to-morrow: I'll devise thee brave punishments for him. Strike up, pipers. [*Dance.*

[*Exeunt omnes.*

FINIS.

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